

# The Nation and The Athenæum

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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

**M.** HERRIOT has come and gone, and a new phrase, "moral co-operation," has been coined to express his complete accord with Mr. MacDonald. Fortunately, there is evidence, of a more definite kind than the official *communiqué* affords, that M. Herriot's mind differs fundamentally from that of M. Poincaré. He is clearly anxious to get the Dawes Report accepted by Germany and put into operation without delay. To this end an Allied Conference is to be held in London in the middle of July. M. Herriot's most important statement for publication was, however, made to Mr. Norman Angell in an interview which is reported in this week's "New Leader":—

"You want to know," said M. Herriot, "on what principle we shall continue our search for security. I reply, the principle of the League of Nations. Under Articles 10, 16, 21, we propose that the Allies should make a common and mutual treaty of assistance, and then, finally, when certain existing difficulties have been overcome, offer to make Germany a party to that treaty, offer to her its advantages and its obligations."

By way of emphasizing this declaration, M. Herriot added that "General Nollet, soldier that he is, is ready to stand by the principle of including Germany in this pact of guarantee."

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It is probable that this suggestion was under discussion at Chequers, for Mr. MacDonald stated in the House of Commons last Monday that one object of the meeting was to discuss "security," adding significantly that "this must not be taken to mean that the intention is to make any exclusive arrangements between any two Powers." Mr. MacDonald appears, however, to prefer the undefined obligations of an *entente* on pre-war lines to a more formal arrangement under the auspices of the League. This preference is unfortunate. There are many difficulties in the way of any device for allaying the carefully fostered fears of the French people, but the least objectionable is surely that which extends and defines the general obligation implied by the Covenant of the League of Nations. The draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance would seem to meet fully M. Herriot's desires. It would be far more in accordance with the

spirit of open diplomacy, and far less likely to give rise to misgivings in other countries than an *entente*, the precise significance of which would always be open to doubt. The Government is credited with a prejudice against this Treaty. It will be a pity if this prejudice is allowed either to frustrate the chances of a real settlement with France, or to throw us back in order to secure that settlement on an *entente* policy, which must almost necessarily be one-sided, and exposed to the suspicion that it will lead to secret arrangements which will prove binding in fact if not in form.

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A more definite, if less welcome, outcome of the Chequers meeting was the drafting of a joint Note to Germany on the question of armament control. The contents of the Note are reasonable, and its tone friendly. That Germany has not entirely fulfilled the requirements of the Treaty in the matter of disarmament is, no doubt, true, though the breaches consist for the most part of the concealment of small scattered stores of rifles which no Government could be expected to unearth. The MacDonald-Herriot Note marks an advance on previous Allied declarations, in that it definitely foreshadows the transference of responsibility for investigation into German armaments to the League of Nations as soon as the Allies have satisfied themselves that certain clauses of the Treaty are being duly executed. This is what Germany has asked for, and it is significant that the Council of the League has just adopted, by a unanimous vote, the British Government's proposal that the League should now prepare to take over investigation into the armaments of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria. That was avowedly a preliminary step to similar action in the case of Germany. As soon as the League has equipped itself with an organ of investigation for the lesser ex-enemy States, it will be in a position to apply it to Germany.

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Every day shows more clearly the extent to which the murder of Signor Matteotti has shaken the whole fabric of Fascism. It is now generally accepted that

the crime was no outbreak of irresponsible fanaticism, but was instigated by persons high in the councils of the Fascist movement, and it is freely alleged that its motive was the suppression of evidence obtained by Signor Matteotti as to financial scandals in which these patriots were implicated. Recent arrests include Signor Rossi, former Chief of the Ministerial Press Bureau, and Signor Marinelli, the Administrative Secretary of the Fascista organization, and the results of the inquiries to be held must be awaited with the gravest apprehension by the leaders of the movement. There is no question as to Signor Mussolini's genuine desire both to bring the criminals to justice and to use the crime as an occasion for "purifying" the Administration. He has, however, to face a formidable combination of difficulties in the growing popular indignation on the one hand, and the increasing turbulence of the Fascist extremists on the other. The weakest point in his position is that, however much he may disapprove this particular crime, it is the logical result of his own political ideas. Again and again he has advocated the use of violence for political ends. Even in his speech to the Senate last Monday, he emphasized the basis of his Government in revolutionary methods and made it clear that he regarded the return to legal and constitutional procedure as a mere matter of expediency, subject to limitation at the Government's convenience. When a leader enunciates such doctrines, his followers will apply them in their own way and at their own time.

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The Prime Minister made a careful, though very brief statement on Mr. Justice McCordie's charge to the jury in the O'Dwyer libel case, in reply to Mr. Lansbury's request for time to debate the matter. Mr. MacDonald remarked that, however "unfortunate" the words used by Mr. Justice McCordie during the trial of the O'Dwyer libel case, "they clearly did not constitute the kind of fault, amounting to a moral delinquency, which constitutionally justifies an address as proposed," and that a Parliamentary discussion would only add to the harm done by them in India. He took the opportunity again to declare that the Government completely associated itself with the decision of the Government in office at the time of the Amritsar tragedy, and drew attention to the fact that the unquestioned right of the judiciary to pass judgment on the Executive if it thinks fit involves a corresponding obligation to guard against "pronouncements upon issues, involving grave political consequences, which are not in themselves being tried." We agree with every word of the Prime Minister's statement, but we nevertheless regret that the House of Commons has not been given an opportunity to pass a resolution, not attacking Mr. Justice McCordie personally, but dissociating itself from the views he expressed. Mr. MacDonald's statement is perfectly correct, but some more dramatic stroke was needed to undo the harm done in India by Mr. Justice McCordie's *obiter dicta*. In a case of this kind the emphasis with which words are invested by the circumstances in which they are uttered is of great importance.

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The Bishop of Oxford's Liquor Control Bill has merits which cause us to hope that it may, as its author desires, receive a second reading, and then be carefully examined by a Select Committee. It is based on the principle of local option, but it avoids the mistake inherent in most local option schemes by giving the public the right to vote—as an intermediary alternative to "no change" and "no licence"—for the re-organiza-

tion of the liquor trade under "disinterested management." Moreover, as provision is made for the alternative vote, the supporters of this course would have a reasonable chance of prevailing against the ardent extremists on either side. We are convinced that the only hopeful course for temperance reformers to take is to work, not for the abolition of the public-houses or even for the drastic reduction of their numbers, but for their transformation into decent places of social and family resort like the Continental café. One has only to glance round many cafés abroad to see that the liquor trade is making little or nothing out of many of the people congregated there, and it may well be therefore that the trade in this country will never on its own initiative provide us with places of the same character. But the improvement of the public-house is also held up by the zealous reformers who are prohibitionist in ultimate intention if not in immediate policy. This is the more regrettable, because in the present state of public opinion, the only result of attempts to suppress public-houses, or to reduce their numbers drastically, is to drive the traffic in liquor into other channels, such as the many clubs which have sprung up for drinking purposes in recent years, which are much more difficult to supervise and control.

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The announcement that the Irish Free State is to have a diplomatic representative of its own at Washington, has evidently perturbed Lord Curzon, but his protest in the House of Lords on Wednesday was embarrassed by a precedent. Mr. Bonar Law stated in 1920 that an arrangement had been concluded between the British Government (of which Lord Curzon was a member) and the Canadian Government for the appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary for Canadian Affairs. It is true that the Canadian Government has not yet availed itself of this arrangement; but since the Irish Treaty provides that the status of the Free State shall be that of Canada, it follows logically that this privilege should be open to both or neither. Lord Curzon could not escape from this conclusion, and the gravity of his warning was therefore impaired. For our part, we welcome this formal step in recognition of Ireland's nationhood, and believe that it is more likely to reduce than to foment friction between Great Britain and the new Dominion.

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While the Housing Bill has obtained its second reading in the House of Commons, the industry which is to produce the houses, and whose readiness to subordinate selfish interests to the public welfare the Bill presupposes, is about to cease work altogether at the end of next week over a dispute in which employers and operatives accuse each other of breach of faith. The employers seem to have acted in a high-handed manner. After the favourable ballot vote of the operatives, the employers refused to conclude the proposed national agreement until the strikers at Liverpool had returned to work. When the operatives' Federation replied that they were as anxious as the employers to effect a settlement at Liverpool, a joint negotiating committee was appointed which, after investigation, drew up terms. On the 16th this committee announced that "a settlement had been arrived at on the national wages question"; this was to be ratified by the employers in conference on the 20th. At that conference, however, the employers refused to ratify until existing agreements in regard to hours and overtime were everywhere observed, and until the Liverpool strike ceased: failing a satisfactory settlement of these points, they declared that a national lock-out would be enforced on July 5th.

The employers explain their decision on the grounds that "in the meantime the Liverpool position went from bad to worse, and further actions delaying the putting into operation of the national agreement were reported." The operatives accuse them of bad faith for repudiating the agreement reached by the joint negotiating committee. The employers affect extreme indignation at this charge, declaring that the agreement was never actually signed by the committee, and employing solicitors' letters to threaten anyone who suggests the contrary. They protest too much, for it is quite evident that the only reason that the agreement was not signed was the technical one that it was left to the secretaries to draw it up in documentary form. At the same time, the agreement, even if it had been signed by the committee, was subject to ratification, and a refusal to ratify, though an extreme step, hardly deserves the "Daily Herald's" description of a "more flagrant example of bad faith" than any recorded "in the whole history of trade unionism." The employers have a serious grievance in the widespread breaches of existing agreements on the operatives' side. The operatives' Federation clearly lacks adequate authority over its constituent unions; but the method which the employers have adopted does not seem well calculated to help it to overcome this weakness. It is to be hoped that the Minister of Labour will succeed in his attempt to bring the parties together again.

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The Democratic Convention in New York is fulfilling expectations as regards the intensity of the struggle over the platform and the Presidential candidate. The keynote speech by Senator Harrison contained an emphatic eulogy of the Wilson policy, but this does not imply that the Wilsonians will succeed in committing the party to a definite announcement on the League of Nations. The League, the Ku Klux Klan, and Prohibition make a trinity which the party managers have been working hard to evade, while they rely upon the oil scandals for the discrediting of the Republicans. As we write the balloting for the candidate has not begun. Everything that has happened during the week serves to bring out the confusion against which the party machine is struggling, and particularly to reveal the strength of the Ku Klux Klan and the gravity of the religious issue, brought sharply into the campaign by the Klan's violent antagonism to the Catholic Church. Senator La Follette, meanwhile, is preparing for his Progressive Convention, which meets in Cleveland on July 4th.

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The final results of the South African elections show a larger turnover than had been generally anticipated. Not only has the Nationalist-Labour Pact a majority of twenty-nine, but the Nationalists themselves are now the largest party in the Assembly, and can command an independent majority on any question on which Labour abstains from voting. General Hertzog has so far defined his policy only in the vaguest terms, except for the definite proposal to create a State Bank; but he has repeated his pledge that secession will not become an issue "till it is demanded by the whole population," and none of those prominent in the 1914 rebellion appear in the Nationalist forecasts of the new Ministry. It is reported that General Hertzog would be prepared to offer Labour three seats in the Cabinet; but there are some indications that the Labour Party will decline participation in the Government, and content themselves with offering general Parliamentary support. While the disappearance of General Smuts from the councils of the Empire will be regretted in this country, we may safely follow the example of the

English Press in South Africa in discounting the wilder utterances of election propaganda, and reserving judgment until the new Government has had an opportunity to make good. For General Smuts himself a safe seat has been found at Standerton, where he will probably be unopposed.

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Sir Martin Conway's report on the present condition of art treasures in Russia is of real importance. First-hand evidence of unimpeachable authority on any aspect of Russian life has become exceedingly difficult to obtain. Sir Martin Conway speaks not of what he has been told, but of what he has seen. He found the Hermitage and the Kremlin at Moscow in excellent preservation. In Petrograd the Winter Palace has been added to the Hermitage to form one vast museum, under the same direction as before the war. The national collections are intact and show no sign of vandalism or spoliation; the Crown Jewels are safe in the Treasury; the arrangements both at Moscow and Petrograd are being steadily improved. Everywhere he found the keenest interest in the collections; many palaces and great houses have been converted to this purpose, and there are now at least 250 museums in Russia against 50 before the war. Sir Martin Conway's report should not only reassure those who feared the destruction or dispersal of Russia's artistic and antiquarian treasures; it should suggest the wisdom of withholding judgment on alarmist reports as to other aspects of Russian life until first-hand and impartial evidence can be obtained.

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A provisional syllabus of the fourth Liberal Summer School, at Oxford, has now been issued. The following are among those announced to give addresses:—

July 30th.—Mr. Asquith. Chairman: Mr. E. D. Simon.  
 , , 31st.—Mr. H. D. Henderson and Mr. W. T. Layton. Chairman: Sir John Simon.  
 , , 31st.—Sir E. Grigg. Chairman: Viscountess Grey.  
 Aug. 1st.—Mr. Philip Morrell and Dr. Cyril Norwood.  
 , , 1st.—Lord Merton. Chairman: Sir M. Bonham-Carter.  
 , , 2nd.—Mr. Ramsay Muir and Mr. J. M. Keynes. Chairman: Mr. Runciman.  
 , , 4th.—Mr. Masterman and Mr. Pybus. Chairman: Captain Wedgwood Benn.  
 , , 4th.—Sir Donald Maclean. Chairman: Mr. Vivian Phillips.  
 , , 5th.—Sir Alfred Mond. Chairman: Mr. Guedalla.  
 , , 5th.—Prof. Gilbert Murray. Chairman: Lady Bonham-Carter.  
 , , 6th.—Mr. E. D. Simon. Chairman: Mr. H. A. L. Fisher.  
 , , 6th.—Mr. Lloyd George. Chairman: Mr. Ramsay Muir.

Those who wish to attend the School should write for particulars to 16, Princess Street, Manchester.

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There will be universal regret that the magnificent adventure of the assault on Mount Everest has been terminated by a tragedy in which Mr. George Leigh Mallory and Mr. A. C. Irvine have lost their lives. Both will be widely and deeply mourned. Mr. Irvine was a newcomer to the expedition, a young climber of the highest promise. Mr. Mallory had already made his name before he joined the expedition in 1921, and was among those who made the record-breaking ascent of 1922. In our next issue we shall publish a tribute to his memory by Mr. Geoffrey Young.

## THE HOUSING BILL.

**I**T has only taken Mr. Wheatley a few months of office to win a remarkable reputation as a Parliamentary performer. Doubtless this reputation is well deserved, and is largely attributable to the agreeable and forceful personality which he undoubtedly possesses. Nor is it mere Parliamentary adroitness that Mr. Wheatley has displayed. He has shown all Mr. Lloyd George's *flair* for reconciling divergent interests. To have produced a housing scheme which has won in some degree the assent of the building trade, the local authorities, and, not least, of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, represents a diplomatic triumph that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald might well envy. Unfortunately such triumphs are apt to be dearly bought. There is the danger that the interests that have been so miraculously reconciled will later be found protesting that they have been misled. There is the further danger that the measure will prove to be a very bad one. For the soundness of the measure, which should be the first consideration, is apt to be the last thing of which the facile negotiator thinks.

The Housing Bill involves two main features: (1) a huge increase in the subsidies granted by the State and (2) an attempt to "guarantee" a building programme for fifteen years. Both these features are, in our judgment, unsound in themselves. In Mr. Wheatley's Bill they are combined in such a way as to add immensely to the objections to each of them. The increase in the rate of subsidy which Mr. Wheatley proposes is very big. The State contribution is to be doubled; and, when the contribution of the local authority is added, the capitalized value of the total subsidy works out at £240, or rather more than half the estimated cost of building the house. It needs very strong reasons to justify the subsidizing of any commodity to the tune of 50 per cent. What reasons are there in the present case? Not that subsidies on so high a scale are necessary to get the houses built. On the contrary, Mr. Wheatley admitted in the House of Commons on Tuesday that the present subsidies are enough to secure the erection of "all the houses that you have labour in the country to build." To increase the subsidy in these circumstances, he further admitted, seems "on the face of it an unbusinesslike thing to do." But he justified his policy on two grounds. The first was that the houses now being built are "for people who can afford to purchase houses, or people who can afford to pay a fairly high rent." We have repeatedly pointed out that it does just as much to relieve the congestion for the poorest classes if the new houses are occupied by those "who can afford to pay a fairly high rent" or even to purchase by means of a loan from a building society, as if they are occupied by a slightly poorer type of tenant. This point was made by speaker after speaker in the House of Commons, and neither Mr. Wheatley nor any other member of the Government attempted any answer to it.

It is, indeed, difficult to see anything but the worst sort of demagogery in this aspect of Mr. Wheatley's scheme. It is his object, he tells us, to let the superior new houses at the "controlled" rents now prevailing for the inferior pre-war houses; indeed, that is the financial basis of the Bill. What public end is to be served by such a policy? Why place the tenant who is lucky enough to get one of the new houses allocated to him in a more favourable position than the tenant of a pre-war house? How, indeed, is the task of allocation

to be done? Are the new houses to be denied to anyone who can "afford a fairly high rent"? If so, what is to be said of this new species of "means disqualification"? If not, how can we be sure, after all, that the new houses will really be occupied "by those who need them most"? The rent policy that underlies the Housing Bill is, indeed, thoroughly unsound. The Government appears to find something shocking in the fact that those who can afford the higher rents secure the better houses. But, so long as differences of income exist at all, this state of affairs is surely not unreasonable. Certainly the opposite state of affairs cannot be defended as more reasonable. Yet the Government proposes to pour out immense sums of public money in the attempt to produce the opposite state of affairs.

But Mr. Wheatley gives another reason. Increased subsidies are justifiable in his opinion because "unless you bring in this great multitude who require houses at low rents, you cannot give to the building industry that guarantee of continued employment which is necessary." This is an extremely significant passage. Its meaning is presumably as follows: "We can easily let at remunerative rents on the basis of the present subsidy all the houses we have the labour to build within the next few years. But not necessarily all those that we can build over the next fifteen years. Before the end of that period lower rents may be essential to get the houses let at all." That this may happen is, we agree, by no means unlikely. But what an argument for the rent policy of the Bill! On houses built within the next few years the State is to pay subsidies on a scale that is excessive from the standpoint not only of the public interest, but of the building trade as well, because this scale of subsidies may be advantageous to the building trade on houses built in later years. We can recall no case in which the expenditure of huge sums of public money has been defended by a responsible Minister on such inadequate grounds.

This argument brings out what is perhaps the worst feature of Mr. Wheatley's scheme. He has contrived to link up his demagogic rent policy with his guarantee to the building trade in such a way that it will be difficult to revise the former without repudiating the latter. Mr. Wheatley not only proposes a 50 per cent. subsidy from public funds. He pledges the State to this subsidy on all houses built within the next fifteen years, on pain of breaking faith with the industry, which will be in a position to claim that it has made concessions on the strength of this pledge. This is a preposterous commitment for Parliament to undertake. It would be preposterous even if it were accepted that housing must be subsidized for ever. But this view is not accepted, and ought not to be accepted. The majority of members of the House of Commons profess to aim at restoring housing to an economic basis, as soon as possible. It will be a piece of recklessness, without a parallel in our Parliamentary history, if, professing this aim, they acquiesce in an engagement which would make its achievement well-nigh impossible.

There is another serious objection to the attempt to link a bad rent policy to the "guarantee." The housing scheme is confined to the erection of comparatively small houses, which Mr. Wheatley himself sneered at last year as "small brick boxes," while some of his colleagues termed them "rabbit hutches." This, however, was also mere demagogery; and we agree, for our part, that while the housing shortage remains as acute as it now is, our main housing effort must be confined to houses of the size proposed. But a very different situation will arise long before Mr. Wheatley's housing programme is completed. We believe that the estimates which are

currently accepted as to our housing needs, the 100,000 houses required to keep pace with the growth of population and so forth, convey a grotesquely false impression of the real position. Indeed, we doubt whether such careless statistics have ever before been accepted as the basis of a great national policy. These calculations are all based on the assumption that our population will continue to grow at its pre-war rate. Fortunately, nothing is more improbable. The growth of population has already materially slackened, and it is never likely again to reach its pre-war rate. Indeed, as Professor Bowley has calculated in an interesting article in the "Economic Journal," if the present level of births, deaths, and emigration were to be maintained, we should reach a stationary population by about 1940. What is the moral? Not that there is much danger of our building capacity becoming excessive, but that it will become desirable to divert it more and more into raising our housing standards by building houses of a better type. But Mr. Wheatley's Bill is limited to houses of 950 feet in area; and, even if this limitation were subsequently withdrawn, it would be gross financial profligacy to build larger and more expensive houses if we are bound to let them at the "controlled" rents now prevailing for pre-war houses. Thus Mr. Wheatley's Bill, if it really operated, would shut the door on what is the only practicable way of raising our housing standards, namely, the building of better houses, to be let to those who can afford to pay sufficiently high rents for them, to make their construction a financially feasible proposition.

If Parliament is asked to undertake commitments which it ought never to undertake, the outlook for the building trade is made in reality more precarious by the Bill. Suppose that over the next few years a few hundred thousand houses are erected, and that this serves to take the edge off the housing shortage, so that the popular demand for large building programmes loses its intensity. Suppose that most local authorities, with whom the initiative rests, uneasy about the debts they are incurring, then decide to hold their hands. They are at liberty to do so. Mr. Wheatley tells us that the State can build in their place. But the State is not pledged to build, and it is not very likely to do so in the circumstances we are supposing. What, then, will be the position of the building trade? The truth is that no promise is given to the building trade that any houses will be built at all. The only promise given is that the State will pay heavy subsidies on them, if the local authorities decide to build them and let them at low rents. This promise serves to make it less, rather than more, likely that the State will press the local authorities to build, and far less likely that private enterprise will afford an alternative source of employment if the local authorities suspend operations at any time, as it is highly probable that they will.

Whether the building trade appreciates this position is not clear. But this much is clear, that if Parliament passes Mr. Wheatley's Bill in anything like its present form, it will only do so because it expects that it will break down at an early date, that building costs will rise, or that the building trade will fail to produce the houses, and thus that the State will be automatically released from its obligation. We agree that it is highly probable that the scheme will break down in some such way. But we cannot regard this as an argument either for the Bill, or for an attitude of *complaisance* towards it. The Bill is a thoroughly bad one. It is based on radically false principles. If it is allowed to pass, it will almost inevitably lead to a situation in which some party or other, the taxpayer, the ratepayer, or the building operative will have reason to feel aggrieved. It ought not to be allowed to pass.

### THE ARMOUR AND THE BATTLE-CRY.

BY THE RT. HON. C. F. G. MASTERMAN, M.P.

**M**R. BALDWIN has been toiling at three labours. The toiling is earnest and sincere. The labours are hopeless. The first is the effort to attract youth to the Conservative Party. The second is to find inspiration through the past history of that party in some positive social enthusiasm of his predecessors. And the third is the formulation of a programme which will bring the Conservative Party into power with an independent majority; which it has only enjoyed once in the last six elections, and which, after but a year, it carelessly threw away. The first effort must be doomed to failure. A Conservative youth, as Meredith once pointed out in a famous poem, is a contradiction in terms. It is unknown in this country or any other country. Even when it has appeared, as in the "Young England" of the mid-nineteenth century, it has been little more than toying with politics by rich men who possessed a certain pity for the poor. As Lord Balfour once declared, it is better that even these rich men should "have their Socialism young," like mumps or measles. A defence of property, caution, a distrust of change, a respect for the enormous traditions of the past, an attitude of kindly humour towards the monstrous vicissitudes of fortune rather than any passionate desire to end or mend them, these in all places and times must be the "notes" of Conservatism. When youth has become Conservative, it has ceased to be young.

The same criticism applies to the effort to find a Conservatism which once accepted and was recognized as the cause of the "people." Mr. Baldwin still appears to cherish the illusion that in contrast to the advocates of *laissez-faire*, Disraeli shines like a star amid the statesmen of the nineteenth century as a clear-sighted preacher and originator of Social Reform. The illusion is as complete as that this theatrical Imperialist had any desire for a free Colonial Commonwealth, or that he had any particular love for primroses, except as an article of food. You may search in vain through his practical efforts when in power for any large or convincing policy or legislation for the betterment of the condition of the people which could in the slightest degree disturb the mind of the three great interests on which Toryism was built—the land, the Church, and the liquor trade. Nor does Lord Randolph Churchill afford any different precedent, although it is true that he won back many of the great towns to Toryism. For he did not win back the towns to Toryism by a programme, social or otherwise. He won them back, as Toryism always has a chance of winning them back, when they were bored with public virtue and tired of reform.

Mr. Baldwin presents his modest programme. It is not calculated to excite a solitary spasm of enthusiasm in the heart of the most fervid Conservative marquis or the most patriotic Conservative minor. Since its production a few days ago it has been denounced by the Conservative papers and seems to have perished almost in the moment of birth. This does not mean that Toryism need despair of ever again ruling England. After the tremendous reforming zeal of the Parliaments which followed the great Reform Bill, Sir Robert Peel achieved a Conservative victory in 1841. After the tremendous reforming zeal of the Parliament which succeeded the second Reform Bill, Disraeli achieved a victory in 1874. The same process was repeated after Mr. Gladstone's greatest efforts. But the victories were achieved, as has been said, not by positive principles, but by negative

reactions. They were achieved because the country was bored with public virtue and tired of reform.

It might be irrelevant—it would certainly be tedious—to examine in detail every item of what has been issued at length under the engaging title "Looking Ahead," as a "restatement of our principles and aims." Some of it resembles the patriotic "faluting" of Birdofredom Sawin, and his spiritual descendants, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Thus it is comforting to learn that the Unionist Party stands for the "preservation of the monarchy," and the "strengthening and developing of the British Empire." Some resembles the hasty and meaningless concoctions through which, in twenty-four hours of feverish activity, the "platforms" of the rival American parties are constructed at Cleveland or Chicago. Most of it steers, not unsuccessfully (in famous phrase), between the Scylla of Yay and the Charybdis of Nay. Every positive statement is confronted with counter-checking cautions. Thus we are all for self-government in India, but not too much of it. We are all for reductions in naval armaments, but with nothing that would jeopardize in the fiercest Jingo estimate the lonely and unassailable supremacy of Britain upon the seas. We are all for the League of Nations, as useful for settling the "smaller disputes between the nations," although we suggest nothing as to any great and courageous advance in using this only weapon left to us for the salvation of the world. We are somewhat unexpectedly enthusiastic for the education of the working people, and almost Socialistic in our demand for public work for the unemployed. But we are fortunately able to qualify any fears that might be aroused by such daring adventures by general overriding axioms concerning the need for strict public economy. With Geddes near, why fear Fisher? "As soon as the National finances permit" is an attractive limitation. The cynic who remembers first the fierce attack on the passing of the National Insurance Bill, then the deliberate attempt to prevent it from being put into operation after it was passed into law, the winning of by-elections against it, and the organized campaign for winning a general election against it, had not war intervened, will note with satisfaction the vague but impressive determination to extend universal contributory insurance, which Mr. Bonar Law once promised to destroy at the first opportunity. Nor will the same unpleasant individual be denied his delectation at the wording of the clause dealing with temperance. The Church is weak indeed, but still to be appeased; the brewers and publicans are stronger perhaps than ever in the councils of the party; therefore, while we pay commendable lip homage to the ideal of "a free and sober people," we offer a secure certificate to our own particular friends that the facilities for the liberal provision of alcoholic refreshment shall remain as they are.

All these, however, are but the beginning of sorrows. Long experience of Toryism, inside and outside the House of Commons, has shown me that apart from the mere dull devotion to vested interests (which has nothing to excite the heart either of youth or age) all that is alive in it possesses or a whole-hearted devotion to a conspicuous god. The god may be false, but the devotion is real. And that god is the establishment of a protective tariff, to reduce unemployment, to foster British industry, to make every wife's husband richer, and to provide, by the opening of windows in the wall, preferences for British Dominions. One looks for a clarion call, for a great crusade, for a policy which alone can save this country from destruction. And one is suddenly brought up short, with a

jerk, at a disconcerting sentence. "Proposals for a general tariff will not again be submitted except upon clear evidence that on this matter public opinion is disposed to reconsider its judgment." One is reminded of Gibbon's promise to a priest to join the Roman Catholic Church whenever all England did likewise.

This would be agreeable to the Free Trader, but for the fact that it is evident from the programme that the Tories intend to introduce Protection if they can by oblique means. Their paragraphs on the safeguarding of industries can give them all that they require in the form of industrial protection, and their paragraphs on Imperial Preference can give them all that they require in the protection of food and raw materials. They are none the less dangerous because disingenuous. And their return to power will be signalized by efforts, but half concealed in this programme, to overthrow the system which has not only made it possible for Britain to prosper, but possible for Britain to live.

It is the programme of a party seemingly overcome by an immense fatigue. It is dead in faith, in courage, and in ideas. It has not even the will to fight for the one constructive idea which it thinks to be true. It believes neither in itself nor in the future. It cries aloud, but there is none to answer it, for indeed, the age has passed it by.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

**I** HEAR that the Chequers meeting, in spite of the official reports, which we have come, from long experience, to read in the sense contrary to what they say, was a very real success. That is what we had reason to expect. Mr. MacDonald and M. Herriot are in much closer accord, both in temper and outlook, than any previous political heads of the two countries have been since the war. They think in the same terms, are both good Europeans, and are equally free from the tendency to reaction, on the one hand, or revolutionary dreams, on the other. The meeting is a good augury for the Conference on July 16th, which ought to set the Dawes scheme in active operation. The invitation to the United States to send a representative to the Conference is a wise step, and in the circumstances in which the present more hopeful situation has arisen, it ought not to be likely that the invitation will be refused. Having set the machine in motion, Mr. Coolidge cannot decently withdraw his countenance for purely electoral considerations. If good is to come from the Conference there must be a frank acceptance on all sides of the scheme, the whole scheme, and nothing but the scheme. It must be adopted in its entirety and put into execution as the only means of restarting the engines of European accord. I do not find any competent authority who believes that the Reparations provisions can be fulfilled, or that if they could be fulfilled they would be anything but a disaster to the recipients of the supposed benefits, but the scheme would give us a fresh start on a new plane of ideas and would restore the atmosphere of negotiation and accommodation in European affairs.

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Much is being said, and more darkly hinted, on the subject of the rearming of Germany, and there is a revival of the note of warning to the Government of that country with which we have been so familiar in the past. If they are honest warnings and the circumstances require them, they will do good; but they must be accompanied by a real change of policy and spirit, and it must be

borne in mind that the real cause of the reaction in Germany and of the growth of the motive of revenge is the abominable events of the past four years, and especially of the past eighteen months, which destroyed the influence of the moderating forces in German life by convincing the people that there was no hope for them outside the recovery of their power to act and strike for themselves. The memory of those events cannot be obliterated by a mere gesture. While the question of security is undoubtedly urgent for France, the corollary of Germany's right to free existence is equally vital to that country, and since it is French policy which has brought things to the present impasse, it is for France to give, with proper guarantees, the assurance that the Poincaré tyranny is abandoned in spirit and letter. Nor must we fear to talk of the "revision of the Treaty." There can be no permanent resettlement or pacification of Europe on the basis of the decisions of Versailles, and the Dawes scheme is important in paving the way to a more judicial verdict, and to the assertion of the authority which the League of Nations was intended to have in establishing European society on a basis of organized peace.

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Hitherto the League has been treated almost as a thing of derision, and much the most hopeful fact in connection with the political *bouleversement* in France is that that country, for the first time, has at its head a man with the wit to see that not only the interests of Europe, but the security of France as well, depends upon the extent to which the League can be made the vehicle of the common purposes and life of international society. I do not think anything in relation to the meeting at Chequers has given more general satisfaction than the announcement that M. Herriot, like Mr. MacDonald, has decided to attend the September Assembly of the League at Geneva in person.

\* \* \*

The days when a snap division on a credit vote could unseat a Government have gone and will never return. Mr. MacDonald's Government goes on from defeat to defeat undismayed and apparently unweakened; the position would not, of course, be possible if there were any real desire in any part of the House that the Government should fall, but there is no such desire, and while that is the case the adverse votes which used to mean so much will be taken in a *Pickwickian* sense. Meantime, the tradition of the past is becoming so obsolescent that its revival, especially in view of the probable permanence of the three-party system, is unthinkable, and henceforth, defeat or no defeat, a Ministry will only resign when its position has become impossible.

\* \* \*

Mr. Masterman, who, after his long absence from Parliament, has entirely recovered the position he held there ten years ago, played the part of executioner to the Government's proposal to send the Housing Bill to Committee. By general consent his speech was one of the most effective delivered during the present session, a fact all the more creditable because the speaker was obviously and painfully in the midst of one of those attacks of hay fever which play havoc with him every summer. He had, of course, the advantage of expressing the overwhelming sentiment of the House. If the interests of the country and the interests of housing itself were alone concerned, probably the best thing would be the frank rejection of Mr. Wheatley's Bill. It is as flagrant a piece of window-dressing as Parliament has ever witnessed, and its defects are almost universally

admitted. The immediate result of the scheme has been to make houses 20 per cent. dearer to build, and it is notorious that before another year is over the whole of the subsidy, capitalized, will have gone into the costs of building. The measure does nothing to deal with the crucial point of the whole problem, the shortage of labour and the policy of under-production. Nor will it have any effect upon the supplies of material, except to increase their cost. Yet this mischievous measure, instead of being ruthlessly rejected, will go through in some form because it is skilful propaganda which it is not profitable wholly to combat. But it would have been a monstrous impropriety to send a measure of such magnitude and of such grave and multitudinous vices to a committee, and in keeping it in the House under the full searchlight of public discussion Mr. Masterman has done a capital service.

\* \* \*

The finer side of life has lost much by the death of Mr. Cecil Sharp. What the Frasers have done for Hebridean song, he did in the larger field of English folk-song. He garnered the melodies of the people and of past times before they had become wholly vanquished by the modern movement. It was a labour of love to which he brought an entirely uncalculating enthusiasm, and he gathered a harvest of beauty for the enjoyment of all time without a thought of his own share in the reward.

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There can be no doubt, I think, that the English captain in the test match at Birmingham made a very inadequate use of his bowling resources in the second innings of the South Africans. It was plainly absurd to leave men of the quality of Parkin and Woolley untried when the batsmen were clearly in possession of the bowling. I suppose it was nothing but bad judgment, though a worse case of bad judgment could not well be imagined. But Parkin in taking the offensive in public in the matter, and announcing that he would not play in the test matches in future, went beyond the proprieties of the case. It is not the function of the players to declare war on the captain, however scurvy they may think they have been used. It is for the Committee of Selection to decide whether the handling of the bowling at Birmingham was of a character that justifies their future confidence.

A. G. G.

## THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

### CONGESTION—CAUSE AND CURE.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25TH.

GOVERNMENT business is in a hopelessly congested condition. The Members responsible for the various Bills are in despair of getting them passed before Parliament adjourns to Marienbad or Margate. Each individual Minister, indeed, shows little concealment of his opinion that it is the Bill piloted by his colleague which ought to be postponed till the Autumn Session. But then comes the difficult question, "Can they be sure of an Autumn Session at all?" The Government have largely themselves to blame in this matter. Week after week, as I have repeatedly pointed out in these columns, they have fumbled and bungled with the business of the House. They have occupied a vast time in passing small Bills, introducing Bills and then withdrawing them, refusing

to sit into the night, and exhibiting all the while a volubility unusual even among the Members of a Front Bench. Suddenly, and about the time the Summer Session would be naturally drawing towards its close, they are pitching at the unhappy heads of the Members of the House of Commons a series of measures, some of immense length, many crowded with technical detail, others involving great implications of policy or social change. Although it would be unfair to call any of these first-class Bills in the ordinary sense of the term, such as the Budget of Mr. Lloyd George, which was discussed continuously from April till December, or Mr. Birrell's Home Rule Bill, which was fought over in desperate and passionate strife, and amid the free use of the Closure, for more than two years; yet they are all Bills which interest and affect large classes of the community and all demand the most careful detailed examination. It is amazing, for example, that a Housing Bill which is hailed by its supporters as marking an epoch in social progress should receive a Second Reading debate limited to a single day in June, with the idea that it will be casually hurried through before the beginning of August. And this a Bill through which its author modestly proposes to build two and a half million of standardized and subsidized houses, and to pledge some nine hundred millions of Government money.

The cause of this hopeless muddle is sometimes modestly attributed to inexperience, and sometimes more truculently denounced as the result of impediments raised against a Government ardent for reform by two parties which are able to refuse the Closure or in other ways injure its energies. Neither of these two explanations will hold water for a moment. No Government has been so kindly treated by the actual Oppositions within the memory of living Parliamentarians. And no Government has found it easier to gain a majority for the curtailing of debate when debate has become tedious or the suspension of the eleven o'clock Rule when that has become obviously desirable. So far as the House itself is concerned, there was no reason, for example, why the Housing Bill should not have been introduced last March (when Committees were idle with no work to do). And with a Money Resolution drawn sufficiently wide to allow the freest possible discussion on a variety of proposals, some fruitful weeks might have been spent in producing a non-controversial measure which would have come back to the House, and passed easily as the work of a united House of Commons. But Mr. Wheatley was too busily engaged in a variety of negotiations with various interested and affected organizations and persons outside the House to have his Bill prepared in time. He has brought it down now burdened with promises, some public and some private, and presented it to the House tied up so closely by resolutions as to be a purely Money Bill; in which, though builders may have been met and builders' operatives may have been met, and building trusts consolidated and Local Authorities squared, the one institution which is forbidden free discussion and amendment is the High Court of Parliament, which is supposed to make the laws of England.

The result of this rather foolishly clever policy has been exhibited by the Conservatives openly voting for a motion to destroy it, and both Liberals and Tories uniting to swamp the Government by a majority of about 150 in their determination that it shall be further examined in detail on the floor of the House of Commons.

This, however, is only an example of one particular Bill. The general chaos of Parliamentary business is due to one cause, and one cause alone, that is, the adoption of a system alien to all British tradition, which was only tolerated, and that but hardly, under the exigencies of war. The Prime Minister deliberately abstains from appearing in the House of Commons. He

is never there except for a few minutes to answer questions on two days, and to speak when critical occasions arise. And his speeches, when those critical occasions do arise, dismally reveal the lack of personal contact, intimate knowledge of that most intangible of all elements, the spirit and temper of the Elected Chamber.

Criticism of this system is not confined to Opposition prejudice, but is perhaps most vocal in the lobbies in the ranks of his own party. The excuse, and to some extent it is a just one, is that the daily and unending routine work of Foreign Office business, and the special preoccupations with Conferences and great European settlements, render his daily and persistent attendance impossible. This may be an excuse, but it is not a remedy. At the age of eighty-four, Gladstone never left the Front Bench, except for the dinner adjournment day by day and week by week. It is fairly obvious that Mr. MacDonald should have recognized that in the unique condition of the leadership of a minority Government in a new House of Commons, a work more delicate and exacting than any Prime Minister has ever faced before, the combination of the two offices was frankly impossible. Toleration, indeed, would be more generous even than it is at the moment were it not that he seems also to combine a third function. Every day the Members of the House itself, who rarely have the pleasure of hearing his speeches or listening to his voice, read of his multifold social activities: the opening of Art Galleries; the inauguration of Labour Clubs; the attendances of private views at Royal Academies; the delivering of interviews, sometimes ill-tempered, to selected newspapers on subjects on which he is evidently ill-informed; or observations at lunches or banquets concerning nationality or literature or the relation of cleanliness to genius. It was perhaps an unkind observer who boasted not without a touch of satire that not since the activities of the German Emperor before the war has any country ever had a Prime Minister charged with such a variety of comment on the ways of life and prepared to deliver these comments on so small a provocation. Undoubtedly these speeches read well in Sunday newspapers and excite awe and admiration among those less familiar with the realities of the problems concerned. But Sir Edward Grey, when Foreign Minister, deliberately cut himself off from all these random entertaining outpourings on the ground that his work was a full man's job; and the House of Commons, though a very generous body, is a very jealous body also. It is not appeased by days wasted in hopeless confusion with Under-Secretaries contradicting each other or by a "Deputy Leader" (a new and previously unrecognized office) with courtesy but without the semblance of authority, endeavouring to pour oil on the troubled water, while the next day they read the lucubrations of a Prime Minister, after opening a football match or advocating the Scotch Sabbath to a Free Church audience, patronizing with fluency the products of a new English Art Club. The system has already reduced the present year to futility, so that at the end of it the harvest of any satisfactory legislation will be the poorest within living memory. If attempted in a second Session it will certainly not be tolerated by what is, after all, a majority of the elected Members of the House.

Meantime the Budget stands as the one unchallengeable success, and Mr. Snowden with the one upstanding reputation on the Government benches. Undoubtedly, if the old system were revived, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the legitimate understudy of the Prime Minister, his firmness and determination combined with the mellowness which has accompanied achievement would make him a welcome leader of an at present rather random and disorganized party. His personal tenacity alone ensured the rejection of the McKenna duties, and last week the same quality restrained his reluctant followers from supporting the beginnings of Imperial Pre-

ference by giving votes which could be represented in the country as votes against the taxation of food. It is interesting to study the attitude of his followers and his colleagues towards him. On the one hand they find his Budget the solitary winning card in all their necessary and interminable orations on Sunday and other evenings; on the other they find that their liberal promises of the scattering of largesse to various classes of indigent persons are hampered and frustrated by his defiant refusal to find the money for pleasant Socialistic schemes. In the Treasury itself they have found no one like him since Gladstone; the very incarnation of what is sometimes flatteringly, and sometimes bitterly, termed the "Treasury mind."

M.P.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE CRISIS IN GERMANY.

SIR,—The main features of the present financial crisis in Germany are already well known in England, but it is not certain that the full seriousness of the situation is realized, and, in any case, a few observations from one who has been seeing it at first hand may interest your readers.

I am now in unoccupied Germany, and the objects of my visit have given me an opportunity to see how certain particular German businesses are affected. The position as I have seen it may be summed up as follows. The introduction of a stable currency some eight months ago had an immediate effect on German business, and as the new currency was supplementary to the depreciated Markpaper, and did not replace it, the first effects were not deflationary. On the contrary, the certainty and self-confidence given by a stable currency gave a fillip to business, which was beginning to languish, and a minor Rentenmark boom developed.

Within a few months, therefore, the new credits were all tied up, owing to extraordinary lack of foresight shown by the Reichstag, and to the bad habits in German business men encouraged by years of inflation, during which debts were automatically wiped out every three months or so.

Consequently, the deflation crisis came not immediately, but six months late, and took the form of a sudden refusal by the Reichsbank to rediscount. This occurred about six weeks ago, and German finance was at once plunged into chaos. Post-war German trade has been built up on the assumption that bank credits are as the widow's curse, inexhaustible, and a commercial system so pampered and spoilt has been left not short of credit, but practically without it. That this is not an exaggeration is shown by one example. A business of unimpeachable standing was offered 50,000 Rentenmarks as advance against a mortgage of property worth 250,000 Rentenmarks.

The big German banks are, indeed, giving no advances at all, and, accordingly, a rich harvest is being reaped by the innumerable private banks in Germany, who still command resources abroad. From these institutions another business as badly in need of funds has succeeded in scraping together £100,000 at the cost of loading its income in a time of grave uncertainty with interest charges amounting to £24,000 a year. The object of these so-called banks is barely concealed. They intend to pile up their charges on embarrassed concerns, to recover their capital by exorbitant interest rates, and, in the end, to take possession of the concerns cheap. But they have overdone it, and many of them are already in difficulties. When they start calling in their loans or going smash, no one knows what will happen.

From all this a very striking result follows. One of the features of the inflation period was the way in which every sensible man got rid of money as soon as he obtained it. Consequently—as was often pointed out—Germany existed on an absurdly small amount of ready cash. This undoubtedly led the Reichsbank to underestimate the amount of money in circulation which would be required in Germany when the value of money became stable—they could safely have issued twice the amount. But now they are on the horns of a dilemma; but for "panic" effects

they could issue many more Rentenmarks, which would be absorbed without difficulty, and such an issue is seriously needed. (The Austrian Government, after stabilizing the Krone, had for a while to keep the presses printing notes hectically to prevent a great appreciation of their money.) But now any increase in the circulation would be interpreted as the beginning of a fresh period of inflation and would lead once again to a "flight from the mark."

On top of this, however, we have the fact that hoarding of Rentenmarks is apparently now taking place, owing to the growing fear that no German bank is absolutely safe. This is exaggerating the shortage of currency, and reducing the deposits of banks, and reducing also their lending capacity. What, then, is to be the end? No one knows, and the demoralized German is reduced once again to talking about "das arme Deutschland," and hoping for something to turn up. The only thing which is saving Germany at present is that there is an unofficial moratorium. Very few businesses could repay anything, and the banks hesitate to precipitate the inevitable and catastrophic liquidation of the deadlock by insisting on repayment.

There is one more factor that must not be overlooked. For years the income tax has been evaded by German businesses by the simple process of postponing payment until the taxes due, say, in respect of 1922, can be paid in 1923 by sending a postage stamp. The habit of putting by reserves to pay income tax has been entirely lost, and the ordinary business is now faced with demand notes in gold marks which they have no means of paying, as all their expenditure has been based on the assumption that they will pay—in effect—no income tax. Further, there has been widespread evasion by understatement of profits, and no one knows what policy the Government will pursue towards defaulters; the firm policy of the Marx Cabinet and of Dr. Schacht has the support of all decent people, and those with guilty consciences are finding it hard to sleep at night.

What are the morals? First, I think no Englishman can fail to say, "Thank God for our stodgy, prudent, English bankers." Much which has been written in praise of the more enterprising methods of German banks will have to be rewritten after this crisis is liquidated.

Secondly, one person, at any rate, who, since 1919, has been making excuses for Germany, has been forced to admit that the greater part of their financial misfortunes are their own fault. The Treaty of Versailles has simply given many German business men a pretext for disregarding common sense and for adopting financial methods which would disgrace a bucket-shop.

Thirdly, the part in this crisis due to bearing of the franc is considerable, but has been overestimated. The main causes are given above, and the crisis would have occurred if the franc had never collapsed.

Fourthly, how hardly does one country learn from the experiences of another. After deflation crises in England, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, the Reichsbank has made nearly every possible mistake.

One word in conclusion. In a letter such as this it is necessary to generalize. Fundamentally Germany is still a rich country with innumerable honest business men and countless sound businesses. These will survive, and in a year's time Germany will be restored to health. But there will be much wreckage by the way.—Yours, &c.,

X.

### PIRANDELLO AT CAMBRIDGE.

SIR,—I should not have ventured to comment on your last week's review of the A.D.C.'s performance of "Henry IV." had not Mr. Francis Birrell, in the course of his interesting and courteous article, more than once invited discussion and emphasized the importance of Pirandello's work, which I rate even higher than does your critic. Even so, I can deal only summarily with the main point at issue between us. Mr. Birrell's view I take to be this. Pirandello is concerned only with the "philosophy of fiction," as it has sometimes been called, whereas the production concentrated the attention of the audience on the problem as to whether Henry was, or was not, mad "all the time, some time, or never?"

Now, I agree, of course, as must any reader of his plays, that Pirandello's main preoccupation is with this

theme. Once again, in "Henry IV," his first question to the audience is this: Has the distinction we draw between the "real" and the "unreal," between the "facts" of existence and that other group of experiences which we call "ideas" or "fancies" or "dreams"—has that distinction any better justification than convention or expediency? Well, I brought out the passages especially concerned with this problem; I emphasized them throughout in grouping and posturing; in fact, I underlined with such success the truth that "Henry" was the *real* man—the showman and the others mere puppets, who moved as he bade them—that several enlightened critics, who had heard the blessed word, but knew not its meaning, wrote me down as an—(I cross myself)—an Experimentalist!

But, Pirandello continues, supposing there is such a distinction between the "real" and the "imaginary," wherein does it lie? That is his second question. For instance, sanity and madness! Where does one end, the other begin? Where's the boundary? When does obsession, prejudice, passion, or brooding, carry us over the mark? And he embodies his conundrum in the exquisitely conceived psychology of "Henry IV." Now I, who by this time knew "Henry" personally far more intimately than most people, have a clear view—which I could illustrate by innumerable quotations—as to when he is sane, as to when madness surges within him and is suppressed, and as to when insanity overmasters him. And that view I expressed—or, rather, Mr. Arundell expressed—as in duty bound, in the performance. He—"Henry"—was mad or not mad at this point or that according to my opinion. Others may differ, but that makes no difference. The problem is not whether he is or is not insane in my opinion, or Mr. Birrell's, or anybody's, but whether there is any validity in the distinction which we all severally draw. Is there any truth in it? Or is Henry right?—"Truth is what seems true to the hundred thousand others who are supposed to be sane."

And so we come to this doctor, about whom Mr. Birrell has doubts. If anyone knows about madness, surely the specialist must. He is, as we learn from the other characters, a coward, a bore, and—to some extent at least—a charlatan. Yet "within his limits" (as Mr. Birrell justly observes) "he is a serious and intelligent man." And it is these virtues, rather than his foibles, that make him ridiculous. For his ponderous inquiries, his pseudo-scientific jargon, his attempts at diagnosis, his prescriptions for a cure, all—though in their way reasonable—become, when put to the test of Pirandello's question, at first fatuous, at last disastrous. His labels won't stick; his pigeon-holes won't fit. The expert in madness, in fact, proves the person least capable of providing an answer. And, for dramatic purposes, just as Belcredi jars on us by his vulgarity, Matilda by her curiosity and sentimentality, so, too, the doctor by his futility—the futility that makes us laugh when we would rather cry. Yet all three are perfectly rational beings, capable at moments of great insight. Mr. Birrell has only to read the doctor's "part" carefully to realize that I, far from "guying" him, had to tone the character down so as to offend as little as possible the susceptibilities of those Englishmen to whom culture brings weak stomachs, and of others who, steeped in classical tradition, believe that tragedy must be gloomy throughout.

With one other statement of your critic I quarrel entirely. "Pirandello," says he, "is preoccupied with mental states even more than with personal relations." This is too big a subject to deal with here. But surely his concern is directly with the relationship of the "ego" to society. "En quoi, demande Pirandello, consiste cette personnalité? En une vérité profonde connue de nous seuls, ou dans l'opinion que les autres s'en font? Et l'opinion que les autres s'en font ne finira-t-elle point par influer, en bien comme en mal, sur la vérité profonde? Et cette vérité profonde est-elle immuable ou se transforme-t-elle incessamment?" Thus Mme. Camille Mallermé; and I think she has put the truth in a nutshell.

Finally, may I, in all friendliness, put two observations to Mr. Birrell as a critic and as the representative of what is best in dramatic criticism. My first is this: The drama is concerned with the theatre rather than with the study. It is not merely intellectual, nor purely literary. Pirandello's art transcends less in the subtlety of his thought than in the poetry of its expression, the simplicity of his language,

and the cunning of his theatrical technique. His appeal is universal. Each may find there according to his measure; and "Henry IV." proved equally attractive to every condition of society and intelligence. I venture to say this because I find so little attention paid by our better dramatic critics to such things as construction, climax, "situation," scenery, dress, color, pace, grouping, light and shade, and the concentration on essentials, all of which constitute the greatest difficulties of playwright, producer, actor, and designer, and on which, to be honest, depends more than on anything else success or failure in performance. The appeal of all great drama is as much sensual and spectacular as intellectual.

And, finally, it has been frequently observed that the measure of a critic's approbation varies inversely with the quality of the play produced and the standard achieved in production. The higher the endeavour, the severer the criticism. Leniency to the bad, captiousness to the good is almost a motto to some. And, although it is the greatest compliment to be judged by the highest standard, yet, since no indication of the change of standard is given, good work tends to suffer almost as much discouragement from able critics as it receives from those others of the tribe whose pens merely betray their ignorance of the first principles of their craft.—Yours, &c.,

FRANK BIRCH.

King's College, Cambridge.

#### "ENGLAND'S GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND."

SIR,—For some months past, in fact, ever since the second of the "England's Green and Pleasant Land" articles appeared, I have intended to pen a few lines of appreciation, of hope that these life-like pictures would continue to have place in the most virile of Liberal weeklies.

Writing not only as a Labour candidate, but as an English Churchman who has discussed the future of the Church of England with a large number of clergymen, I would express the considered opinion that until either (1) Disestablishment takes place, or (2) the Princes of the Church learn and teach the principles of administration, the Church will never regain the position it once held in national life. Therefore, writings such as "H. C.'s," which must undoubtedly have a beneficial effect in awaking Churchmen to a realization of the situation, are all to the good. The more of them, the better. And what applies to the Church in rural areas, applies equally to matters of the farm, the shop, and the village institute. Once the shires ruled the cities; now the reverse is the case, and the problems of the hamlet are left to "lie on the table." Why? Because of the lack of "H. C.'s" having the power to raise the interest of the public, to draw attention to the magnitude of these problems, and to their importance in England's future.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN STEVENSON (Capt.).

June 21st, 1924.

#### WOMEN'S WELFARE CENTRES.

SIR,—May we, through your columns, draw the attention of your readers to a proposal to open a Women's Welfare Centre, at which medical advice on birth control will be given in North Kensington?

Such a centre will meet the need of women in the crowded slums of Notting Dale and North Kensington, and will be easily accessible to women from North-West London and from Hammersmith, Paddington, St. Pancras, &c. The Centre will be run on the same lines and in co-operation with the Walworth Women's Welfare Centre. Suitable premises have been found, and it is hoped to open in October.

At a drawing-room meeting held on June 23rd, under the chairmanship of Mr. Harold Cox, when Lord Buckmaster kindly spoke on behalf of the proposal, a considerable proportion of the sum required to start with was promised; at least £150 is, however, still needed, and subscriptions or donations will be gratefully received by The Hon. Mrs. Dighton Pollock (Hon. Treasurer) at 13, Kensington Park Gardens, W.11.

Thanking you for giving publicity to this letter.—Yours, &c.,

MARGARET LLOYD.  
MARGARET POLLOCK,

June 23rd, 1924.

## THUNDER AT WEMBLEY.

By VIRGINIA WOOLF.

IT is nature that is the ruin of Wembley; yet it is difficult to see what steps Lord Stevenson, Lieut.-General Sir Travers Clarke, and the Duke of Devonshire could have taken to keep her out. They might have eradicated the grass and felled the chestnut trees; even so the thrushes would have got in, and there would always have been the sky. At Earl's Court and the White City, so far as memory serves, there was little trouble from this source. The area was too small; the light too brilliant. If a single real moth strayed in to dally with the arc lamps he was at once transformed into a dizzy reveller; if a laburnum tree shook her tassels, spangles of limelight floated in the violet and crimson air. Everything was intoxicated and transformed. But at Wembley nothing is changed and nobody is drunk. They say, indeed, that there is a restaurant where each diner is forced to spend a guinea upon his dinner. What vistas of cold ham that statement calls forth! What pyramids of rolls! What gallons of tea and coffee! For it is unthinkable that there should be champagne, plovers' eggs, or peaches at Wembley. And for six and eightpence two people can buy as much ham and bread as they need. Six and eightpence is not a large sum; but neither is it a small sum. It is a moderate sum, a mediocre sum. It is the prevailing sum at Wembley. You look through an open door at a regiment of motor-cars aligned in avenues. They are not opulent and powerful; they are not flimsy and cheap. Six and eightpence seems to be the price of each of them. It is the same with the machines for crushing gravel. One can imagine better; one can imagine worse. The machine before us is a serviceable type, and costs, inevitably, six and eightpence. Dress fabrics, rope, table linen, old masters, sugar, wheat, filigree silver, pepper, birds' nests (edible, and exported to Hong-Kong), camphor, bees-wax, rattans, and the rest—why trouble to ask the price? One knows beforehand—six and eightpence. As for the buildings themselves, those vast, smooth, grey palaces, no vulgar riot of ideas tumbled expensively in their architect's head; equally, cheapness was abhorrent to him, and vulgarity anathema. Per perch, rod, or square foot, however ferro-concrete palaces are sold, they too work out at six and eightpence.

But then, just as one is beginning a little wearily to fumble with those two fine words—democracy, mediocrity—nature asserts herself where one would least look to find her—in clergymen, school children, girls, young men, invalids in bath-chairs. They pass, quietly, silently, in coveys, in groups, sometimes alone. They mount the enormous staircases; they stand in queues to have their spectacles rectified gratis; to have their fountain pens filled gratis; they gaze respectfully into sacks of grain; glance reverently at mowing machines from Canada; now and again stoop to remove some paper bag or banana skin and place it in the receptacles provided for that purpose at frequent intervals along the avenues. But what has happened to our contemporaries? Each is beautiful; each is stately. Can it be that one is seeing human beings for the first time? In streets they hurry; in houses they talk; they are bankers in banks; sell shoes in shops. Here against the enormous background of ferro-concrete Britain, of rosy Burma, at large, unoccupied, they reveal themselves simply as human beings, creatures of leisure, civilization, and dignity; a little languid perhaps, a little attenuated, but a product to be proud of. Indeed, they are the ruin of the

Exhibition. The Duke of Devonshire and his colleagues should have kept them out. As you watch them trailing and flowing, dreaming and speculating, admiring this coffee-grinder, that milk and cream separator, the rest of the show becomes insignificant. And what, one asks, is the spell it lays upon them? How, with all this dignity of their own, can they bring themselves to believe in that?

But this cynical reflection, at once so chill and so superior, was made, of course, by the thrush. Down in the Amusement Compound by some grave oversight on the part of the Committee several trees and rhododendron bushes have been allowed to remain; and these, as anybody could have foretold, attract the birds. As you wait your turn to be hoisted into mid-air, it is impossible not to hear the thrush singing. You look up, and discover a whole chestnut tree with its blossoms standing; you look down, and see ordinary grass, scattered with petals, harbouring insects, sprinkled with stray wild flowers. The gramophone does its best; they light a horse-shoe of fairy lamps above the Jack and Jill; a man bangs a bladder and implores you to come and tickle monkeys; boatloads of serious men are poised on the heights of the scenic railway; but all is vain. The cry of ecstasy that should have split the sky as the boat dropped to its doom patters from leaf to leaf, dies, falls flat, while the thrush proceeds with his statement. And then some woman, in the row of red-brick villas outside the grounds, comes out and wrings a dish-cloth in her backyard. All this the Duke of Devonshire should have prevented.

The problem of the sky, however, remains. Is it, one wonders, lying back limp but acquiescent in a green deck-chair, part of the Exhibition? Is it lending itself with exquisite tact to show off to the best advantage snowy Palestine, ruddy Burma, sand-coloured Canada, and the minarets and pagodas of our possessions in the East? So quietly it suffers all these domes and palaces to melt into its breast; receives them with such sombre and tender discretion; so exquisitely allows the rare lamps of Jack and Jill and the Monkey-Teasers to bear themselves like stars. But even as we watch and admire what we would fain credit to the forethought of Lieut.-General Sir Travers Clarke, a rushing sound is heard. Is it the wind or is it the British Empire Exhibition? It is both. The wind is rising and shuffling along the avenues; the Massed Bands of Empire are assembling and marching to the Stadium. Men like pincushions, men like pouter pigeons, men like pillar-boxes pass in procession. Dust swirls after them. Admirably impassive, the bands of Empire march on. Soon they will have entered the fortress; soon the gates will have clanged. But let them hasten! For either the sky has misread her directions or some appalling catastrophe is impending. The sky is livid, lurid, sulphurine. It is in violent commotion. It is whirling water-spouts of cloud into the air; of dust in the Exhibition. Dust swirls down the avenues, hisses and hurries like erected cobras round the corners. Pagodas are dissolving in dust. Ferro-concrete is fallible. Colonies are perishing and dispersing in spray of inconceivable beauty and terror which some malignant power illuminates. Ash and violet are the colours of its decay. From every quarter human beings come flying—clergymen, school children, invalids in bath-chairs. They fly with outstretched arms, and a vast sound of wailing rolls before them, but there is neither confusion nor dismay. Humanity is rushing to destruction, but humanity is accepting its doom. Canada opens a frail tent of shelter. Clergymen and school children gain its portals. Out in the open, under a cloud of electric silver, the bands of

Empire strike up. The bagpipes neigh. Clergy, school children, and invalids group themselves round the Prince of Wales in butter. Cracks like the white roots of trees spread themselves across the firmament. The Empire is perishing; the bands are playing; the Exhibition is in ruins. For that is what comes of letting in the sky.

## GEORGE FOX AS SOCIAL REFORMER.

BY EDWARD GRUBB.

THE three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, which occurs this July, presents an opportunity of estimating the value to the world of his life and work. In this article it is proposed to treat the subject from the social rather than from the strictly "religious" point of view, though Fox himself would have strongly dissented from drawing such a distinction. For him all life was one, and his endeavour to raise to a higher level the relations of men to one another was the direct outcome of his conception of the relation in which they stood to God.

Fox's discovery of a Divine "Light" or "Seed" in the souls of men—itself the result of an intense personal experience in which "an ocean of light" from God seemed to disperse the "ocean of darkness" into which the theologies of his day had brought him—was but a recovery of the Johannine conception of the "Word" or *Logos* which had "become flesh" in Jesus Christ. It necessarily carried with it the conviction that the true Light "enlighteneth every man," that God has no favourites. All men everywhere were, at least potentially, recipients of the Light, if only they would turn to it and obey it. No one could call another person "common or unclean"; no group of men could claim privilege or ascendancy over others. Belief in universal Brotherhood, which is a direct outcome of the sense of the worth of man as man, taught by Jesus in word and act, became once more dynamic when it was based on the assurance of "universal and saving light." Hence "philanthropy," if we use the word in its true sense of the love of man, became an essential feature of the Christian way of living. Everything in existing institutions or social arrangements which obstructed the shining of the Light in men's souls—everything that starved or stunted the growth of the Divine "Seed" within them—was contrary to the will of God and must be wrestled with and removed.

Consequently the "Children of the Light," and Fox in particular, without knowing or consciously intending it, became the most ardent social reformers of their day. They had no thought-out philosophy of human relations, no settled scheme for the reform of the institutions of their time. It was simply that whenever and wherever they saw humanity oppressed and degraded, the Divine image in men's souls distorted and disfigured, they felt a burning sense of shame and an irresistible impulse to set men free. At the very outset of his public preaching Fox heard an inward call to approach the justices at Mansfield (who were met to fix the rate of wages for their district under the Statute of Apprentices) with an exhortation to provide at least "a living wage." We know, from the writings of his contemporary Winstanley and others, that such a protest against oppression was urgently needed. In Cornwall he met with the inhuman practice of "wrecking" ships and plundering their cargoes, and issued a public denunciation against it. The savage penal code of the time, and the barbarous cruelty practised in the prisons, of which, in the days of persecution, Fox and his friends had ample experience, were among the abuses to which they often drew the attention of the authorities. The reform of prisons in the nineteenth century was largely due to the initiative of Fox's follower Elizabeth Fry.

The evil practice of Slavery, which after being almost eliminated from Christendom had once more dis-

graced it, owing to the discovery of the New World and of the possibility of exploiting its rich resources with the labour of negro slaves, shocked the sensitive soul of Fox as soon as he came into contact with it. In the island of Barbadoes, in 1671, he exhorted the slave-holders to treat their negroes well, to train them in the Christian religion, and as soon as possible to set them free. He does not seem to have discerned that slaveholding was wrong in itself. But his companion, William Edmundson, soon began to declare that it was inconsistent with Christianity, and was promptly brought before the Governor on a charge of inciting the negroes to rebellion. It was, however, another century before the Society of Friends in the colonies of the West purged itself from the stain of slave-holding. Thanks mainly to the labours of John Woolman, it has the honour of being the first of the professedly Christian bodies to make the practice inconsistent with membership. And on this side of the Atlantic the followers of Fox became ardent supporters of Clarkson and Wilberforce in their long agitations against the Slave Trade, and the legal status of Slavery in the British colonies.

The "Testimony against War" is probably the best-known tenet of the Society of Friends; and, like the protest against Slavery, it is an inevitable outgrowth of the central principle of the Divine Light in men. For those who really believe that other men's bodies may indeed be "temples of the Holy Ghost" cannot destroy them; they must strive to live in the spirit of their Master and to follow in His steps; and it is His voice in their souls, not that of a military authority, to which alone they can promise final obedience. Fox himself seems never to have had any doubt that war was an impossible occupation for the Christian. In 1650, before he had attracted many followers, he was urged to become a captain in the Parliamentary Army. "But I told them," he says, "that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." In the years that followed, a considerable number of soldiers joined the Quaker ranks, and Fox does not seem to have been in a hurry to get them out of the army. He evidently preferred to leave them to the teaching of the Spirit of Christ in themselves. But, before the Restoration in 1660, most of them had either left the army of their own accord or been turned out of it as not amenable to military discipline. Just after the Restoration a fierce persecution broke out against the Quakers, who were suspected of complicity with the "Fifth Monarchy men" in a plot against Charles II. They therefore issued an elaborate Declaration, which contains these words: "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world." That is unmistakable, and it states what has always been the official position of the Quaker body. What troubles it has brought them into, and what difficulties and inconsistencies there have been in the endeavour to live up to it, have been well told in a recent book, "The Quakers in Peace and War," by Miss Margaret E. Hirst.

It was in the American colonies that the practicability of their Peace principle was put to the severest test; for there they were not, as they were in England, barred out by law and practice from sharing in the work of government. The Quakers stand apart from most of the mystical sects that had preceded them by their willingness, if called to do so, to take part in political activity. For them no aspect of life was to be common or unclean, and the work of government might be a legitimate field for Christian service. In 1672 Fox wrote to the Governor of Rhode Island, in words that might well be inscribed on the walls of every Parliament House: "Mind that of God within you. Stand for the good of your people. Take off all oppression: and set up justice over all." It was a problem not easily solved for Quaker rulers in those colonies to keep clear of responsibility for armed defence, when a majority of their people, not Quakers, demanded it, and when they themselves felt no freedom to force their own way of life on others who did not believe in it.

What they usually did was to retain their official positions, but to leave warlike measures to be carried out by colleagues who had no scruples against them.

It was in Penn's colony of Pennsylvania that their principles won the most noteworthy success. From the first they treated the native Indians with scrupulous justice, as men of their own flesh and blood, and these Indians became their firm friends and supporters. For more than seventy years, while Penn's principles were maintained in practice, they were perfectly safe without any armed defence, while other colonists, armed to the teeth, suffered repeated raids and massacres. Then, on the outbreak of war with France, they were compelled to retire from the Government, and the "holy experiment" came to an end. While it lasted, it proved impressively the practicability of the Quaker way of life. That way is much more than "non-resistance"; it involves the faith and courage to appeal to the Divine Light in the souls of men, even the most apparently hardened and degraded, and to believe that justice and goodwill can disarm the fiercest foe.

The great war of 1914-1918 and its terrible aftermath have provided further opportunities for proving the efficacy of moral forces to exorcise the spirit that produces war—and, it is to be hoped, eventually to rid the world of the nightmare that oppresses it. In the work of healing and restoration the Quakers have taken a not unworthy place; and at the present time, in many of the European countries, the minds of men are open as never before to receive the message of a spiritual Christianity that is prepared to take the risk of living by the law of love and in the spirit of the Cross. The infusion of such a spirit into our international relations is perhaps the soul without which our League of Nations will be but a feeble body. And so the world may yet owe much to the faith and insight, the courage and obedience, with which, nearly three centuries ago, George Fox followed the Light.

### RODEO.

WAS there ever in Londinium a monumental amphitheatre such as that which still serves for public performances at Arles, and that which, rising suddenly in the country a few miles from Seville, now alone marks the site of Italica? If there was not, enclosures must have been improvised—perhaps you must love games in order to build empires—for lions and savage bulls and bears were apparently as necessary to the Roman as wickets and balls to the English colonist. Since the Romans left, no exhibition of skill, courage, and strength so spectacular as the Rodeo can have been put before the London public. These cowboys and girls appear beings apart, without fear, and indestructible. That may be, let them run what risks they please, some say, but what of the animals? I was not present on the first day of the Rodeo before the public lassoing of the steers was stopped. I imagine it would be for some people as painful a sight as the Grand National. Those who would put down all hunting, shooting, and fishing may logically object even to the wrestling with steers and riding of vicious horses which are still to be seen. For these beasts would presumably prefer to be left to themselves. But nothing against the Rodeo need be said, I think, by those who are prepared to eat grouse or salmon. I do not believe that one spectator in twenty thousand could derive pleasure from any discomfort felt by the beasts in the Rodeo as I saw it. Drop the notion that a sport is innocent if it is English, and cruel if it is not, and take the Rodeo on its merits as a spectacle. They are prodigious.

To amateurs of the circus, trick-riding and the precise use of the lasso will not be new, though the size of the Wembley arena enables the horses to gallop, so that a new grade of excellence in these feats is attained. The

riding of untamable horses is, I think, a sport unknown to Europe. Leaping, swerving, plunging, curving, in their demonic energy these outlaws are the steeds of Delacroix's romantic imagination; and when the riders remain in the saddle, men and girls alike, waving their hats in circles all the while (the use of only one hand upon the reins is permitted), it seems that the centaurs have emerged from their retreat. The steers, when ridden, buck no less actively than the horses, and it is surprising to see at what a pace they can move. These turns, or rather competitions, are brilliant enough, but in retrospect they pale. For after them comes the steer-wrestling.

A bull-fight is more dangerous, and in some respects more beautiful, but not so delightful and hardly so astonishing. One misses at Wembley the confined space of the bull-ring, the fanatical excitement of the tightly packed crowd, the gaiety of the fighters' costumes, of the caparisoned mules, and of the flowered shawls thrown by fine ladies over the fronts of their boxes; the Andalusian sky, too, and the straight Giralda rising above the *plaza* on its sunny side where the poorer spectators have their seats. The exquisite movements of the *toreros*, stylized by the tradition of centuries, the pose of the *banderilleros* on tiptoe with their hands above their heads, and their lightning pirouettes as the bull charges past, the gaudy waving of red and purple cloaks, and, at the end, the loneliness of the *espada*, facing with only a thin rapier in his hand the heavy-shouldered bull—all this is absent. But so, too, are the gored horses.

At the Rodeo, a gate at one end of the stadium opens, and as the steer leaps out of the *toril*, music sounds, quite in the Spanish manner. Down the arena, faster and faster, rushes the steer. The cowboy overtakes it, and, riding by its side at full gallop, leaps suddenly upon its horns. Then he slides down its neck, and, holding still to its horns, sets feet to ground, and in an oblique position, like the cowcatcher on a locomotive, is pushed along in front of it still at great speed for fifty yards or so, until the steer is pulled up by this unyielding human brake. Had I not seen this, I would not have believed it possible. Next he slips beneath the beast's head, catches one horn between his thighs, and, grasping the other with both hands, turns it till the steer is forced to fall upon the ground; its neck is weaker than the man's wrists. The umpire's flag falls, the cowboy loses hold, and the steer rises and trots off, nor ever thinks to attack its conqueror now lying at its mercy on the ground. The cowboy who gets the steer down in the shortest time wins the competition, but after seeing man and beast locked together in wrestle sometimes for minutes on end, you feel that such endurance equally deserves the prize. No, a bull-fight may be more beautiful; it is not more exciting.

The Rodeo ends with a wild horse race. A dozen cowboys enter the arena, saddle and mount the broncs. The first to ride one past a line in the middle wins. Some are thrown at once; there is utter confusion; and luck alone, it seems, determines which horse goes in the right direction. By now the night sky is a deep blue, the moon above the colossal tiers is pallid beside the lamps which illuminate the arena, and seen from above in silhouette at intervals against the oval space of acid-green grass, the horses, bucking till head meets tail between their feet, describe unimaginable arabesques.

As I watched my fellow-Cockneys limply strap-hanging on the way back to bed, the cowboys and girls appeared the children of some superhuman stock, steel bones and rubber flesh, thighs like pincers, eyes infallible, and courage beyond my understanding. Such nerve comes from lack of imagination? Who knows: but I think Zeus must have tricked the American Alcmenas by taking on the semblance of their farmer husbands, and visited in a shower of dollars the Danaës of the Western plains. For only from his Olympian loins could have sprung these rivals to Heracles, to Perseus, and to Bellerophon.

CHARLES MORTIMER.

## ART

## THE CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY.

THE official opening of the loan exhibition of modern foreign paintings at Messrs. Colnaghi's Galleries by the Prime Minister, who made a very sensible and modest speech, was a significant event, for it marks the change of attitude to "modernism" with peculiar aptness and emphasis. An instructive footnote to the history of modern art would consist in an account of the English public and professional criticism of modern Parisian art. Such an account would raise the interesting question why English art lovers have remained so stubbornly hostile to the modern movement in painting, although abstract design, such as much Celtic art, has been quite acceptable, as also has been purely representational painting. The latter statement needs no defence, and the fact that our museums are filled with abstract designs of one kind and another is enough to show that the English stomach has, at any rate, no particular intolerance for it, and, in spite of a thousand proclamations to the contrary, there is no indication whatever that the English object to a well-designed picture provided it represents fairly accurately, like the old masters, the artist's visible environment—"respects Nature" is the correct phrase. In this matter there is really no reason to believe that the English differ from other peoples.

But modernist art the English have disliked, and they have disliked it in a greater degree than the French, the Germans, or the Americans. This appears to me to be due to the English habit of specializing. Abstract design, often associated with archaeology, is studied and enjoyed in this country by one class of mind, while purely representational painting is studied and enjoyed by quite another. In trying to train English art lovers to appreciate the French school, modernist critics have really been asking the two groups to combine. But their interests have been far too distinct for that, and the progress that has been made has depended on reconciling the pictorialists to heavier and heavier doses of design. At first that potion took their heads badly and, acting on them as whisky acts on the Scots, turned their minds towards their enemies. Consequently there has raged for some years in England a kind of aesthetic Great War. It is to be hoped that the opening of the Contemporary Art Society exhibition may be made to correspond, if not with the signing of peace, then with Armistice Day. The position of orthodox England is quite genuinely a difficult one. The modern French painters have not, as Turner and the English naturalistic painters did, made it their chief business to study Nature with an absorbing scientific passion, but have rather acted on the assumption that if an artist has or can cultivate an eye for design, he will almost unconsciously rearrange natural forms and colours in patterns having an artificial beauty of higher aesthetic value than anything Nature can contrive. So long as the modernist was quite frankly abstract, the public merely felt that the proper place for his decorated surfaces was not within a picture-frame on a wall, but on some object like a table-top or a door. It was only when the French designer took to dabbling in pictorialism (*cf.*, the Matisse "Figure," No. 37) that English collectors and critics in general became thoroughly baffled and grieved. The painter was expected either to remain a decorator in the strict sense or else devote himself wholeheartedly to depicting his visible surroundings. Modernist painters have, as a matter of fact, increasingly neglected abstract design, and have referred more and more to actual appearances. As that process has developed, the circle of adherents of the school in England has steadily widened.

A few abstract pictures by Braque, Picasso, and others are included in the exhibition, but nearly all the later works are more realistic than would have been tolerated in Paris a few years ago. But there is all the difference between these and the ordinary representational picture. Whether it be due to a training in Cubism or to other causes, the fact is that some of the most realistic pictures in the exhibition are the best as

design, and there is very little doubt that, at least according to the evidence of this collection, the enriching of content has been a gain. As might be expected, some artists are better represented than others. Neither M. de Segonzac nor M. Marchand are seen quite fully enough. On the other hand, M. Matisse's whole recent history as a painter may be read through the thirteen pictures by him, and some wonderful examples are included, such as the "Portrait of a Girl" (41), in which he is still mainly interested in the possibility of exploiting the forms suggested by a single element in the subject he chooses, namely, the checked coat of his sitter. In "The Pink Parasol" the whole scene, including a figure, an esplanade, furniture, hills, &c., has interested him, every part contributing its share both of the design and the "literary" impression. M. Derain is also well represented by such pictures as the exquisite "Still Life" (11), and especially by the wonderfully constructed "Landscape" (9), a picture that repays the closest study. Nothing could surpass the way in which the water in the foreground is made to recede from the eye by means of the black line under the earth bank contrasted with the soft curve of the opposite green bank.

R. R. TATLOCK.

## FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

"THE RAT," at the Prince of Wales Theatre, is one of those plays which fills the most cold-blooded with the warm rich ichor of hope; for, however disgruntled, we all wish to believe that kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith in other people more than Norman blood. Nothing is more agreeable for the crusted die-hard, fresh from the anathemas of the "Morning Post," than to spend an evening weeping over the simplicity and unselfishness of thieves and pickpockets, especially if the scene is laid not in London, but at the safer distance of Paris. Mr. Ivor Novello is a supremely moving, loyal, and gentle Apache, even if a trifle violent when his womenkind are insulted by persons with a comfortable bank balance. No wonder that all the expensive cocottes want to ruffle his hair. It may thus be deduced that "The Rat" is the soupiest of melodramas, rendered tolerable by some unusually good acting. It was received with great enthusiasm by the audience, a gratifying proof that the supposed cynicism of the age is less formidable than many have feared.

It is singular and shameful that the people of the greatest sea-Power in the world have so few opportunities of studying the pictorial record of maritime development, particularly on the mercantile side. Importance is given to the present Shipping Exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery by the loan of over three hundred prints from the Macpherson collection. Purely naval subjects, such as those recently shown at the Gievee Gallery are excluded; the selection comprises East Indiamen, famous clippers such as "Ariel" and "Lightning," Blackwall Frigates, experimental and early steamships, whaling subjects, yachts, and some very fine views of British and foreign seaports from the early sixteenth century onwards. Many of the prints shown are extremely rare, and almost without exception they are in beautiful condition, while their historical and nautical interest will leave lovers of old shipping hungry for more.

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—  
Monday, June 30. "Twelfth Night," Old Vic. Company, at the New Oxford.

Wednesday, July 2. "The Snare," at the Savoy. Thursday, July 3. "Midsummer Madness," at the Lyric, Hammersmith.

Arnold Trowell, Violoncello Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Friday, July 4. Blanche Marchesi, Vocal Recital, at 4.45, at Aeolian Hall.

OMICRON.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## CHARACTERS.

**A**N interesting addition has just been made to the Broadway Translations in "A Book of Characters," compiled and translated by Richard Aldington (Routledge, 12s. 6d.). The "Character," as a literary form, has had a long and somewhat erratic history. There is a learned dispute as to whether it was invented by Aristotle or by Theophrastus. Whoever of the two was actually the inventor, it was certainly Theophrastus who became the inspiration and model of later writers. The Romans did not write Characters, and it was nearly nineteen hundred years before the form was revived; at any rate, in Mr. Aldington's collection there is no example between Theophrastus and Ben Jonson. But in the seventeenth century the writing of Characters became a craze, and four-fifths of Mr. Aldington's anthology was written between the years 1600 and 1700. In England, Joseph Hall started the craze with his "Characters of Virtues and Vices," published in 1608; he was followed closely by Overbury, Breton, Earle, and later by Fuller and Samuel Butler. In France, the greatest of all Character writers, La Bruyère, published his "Caractères" in 1688. After 1700 there was a rapid decline; the eighteenth century, with Steele and Addison in England and Vauvenargues in France, continued to write Characters, but the model was no longer Theophrastus, but La Bruyère. The Character, however, now took second place to the Essay, and in the nineteenth century it was entirely swept away in the deluge of the Novel.

\* \* \*

It is not altogether easy, as Mr. Aldington and others have found, to define accurately what constitutes a Character. To describe the character of a particular individual is not to write a Character. In this form of writing the person described must in some way or other be represented as a type. Nevertheless, some of the best Character writers, like La Bruyère, describe individuals. Mr. Aldington admits that "actually certain Characters and Portraits shade one into the other by imperceptible degrees. A Character which pretends to delineate a type may, in fact, be a Portrait of an individual, given the appearance of generality by the fear, envy or affection of the writer; and, similarly, a Portrait may be so composed that it expresses a type as much as an individual. Decision in these ambiguous cases must be largely arbitrary."

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The interesting thing with regard to Characters and their writers is to observe the different purposes which the various writers have tried to make this rigid and limited literary form serve. Theophrastus, being a Greek, stands in a class by himself. Nothing can show more clearly the difference between the ancient and the Christian world than a comparison of Theophrastus and his modern imitators. "The Flatterer" or "the Grumbler," he begins, "is this kind of man . . ." and then he proceeds with extraordinary economy to give the most important characteristics of that particular type of man as he existed in Athens in the third century B.C. The perfect clearness of line in which the character is drawn is amazing. There is not the shadow of romance or sentimentality or criticism or cynicism; we are given no moralizing and left without a moral; there is no trace of literary or ethical decoration.

\* \* \*

As soon as you turn the last page of Theophrastus in Mr. Aldington's collection, and come to Joseph Hall

writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, you are in another world. The Greek called his book simply "Characters"; the Englishman adds to his title "of Virtues and Vices"—an illuminating, if not ominous, addition. "Virtue is not loved enough; because she is not seen: and Vice loseth much detestation; because her ugliness is secret." So Joseph Hall begins his preface. In other words, the modern Character is to have an "object"; it is to teach us to love virtue and hate vice; it is to be an instrument of the moralist and the preacher. It is down this broad road of morality and moralizing that one large band of Character writers go. The wilderness of words which they very soon reached may be seen in Nicholas Breton, who wrote for "those Good Spirits, that will take them in Good Part and make use of them to Good Purpose," and who tells us that "An Atheist or Most Bad Man" is "a figure of desperation, who dare do anything even to his soul's damnation. He is by nature a dog, in wit an ass, in passion a bedlam, and in action a devil."

\* \* \*

While one band of modern Character writers went off down the highway of morality, another took the road of what was called "wit." With Hall, Overbury, and Earle the important thing is not what they have to say about types and characters, but the way they say it. They are interested not in human beings but in words, not in the form but in the decoration. The Character is merely a convenient vehicle for a firework display of wit or "conceits." So in Overbury we read:—

"An Hypocrite is a gilded pill composed of two ingredients, natural dishonesty and artificial dissimulation. Simple fruit, plant, or drug, he is none, but a deformed mixture, bred betwixt evil nature and false art, by a monstrous generation; and may well be put into the reckoning of those creatures that God never made."

And Earle writes:—

"A Child is a man in a small letter, yet the best copy of Adam before he tasted of Eve or the Apple; and he is happy whose small practice in the world can only write his character."

Overbury and Earle are still worth reading, though they are writers only of the second rank, and, if you take them in too large doses, their conceits and over-decorated prose produce a mental nausea. It was left to La Bruyère to show what a really great writer could make of the Character as a literary form. I do not think that Mr. Aldington in his introduction does sufficient homage to the supremacy of La Bruyère, and this is the more to be regretted because inevitably the English translation fails to reproduce the subtle literary quality of the "Caractères." I am near the end of my page; if I let myself go about La Bruyère" I should run over many pages, but if you want to see the difference between the first-rate and the second-rate writer, compare the sentences quoted above from Overbury and Earle with this opening of a "Caractère":—

"Le fleuriste a un jardin dans un faubourg; il y court au lever du soleil, et il en revient à son coucher. Vous le voyez planté et qui a pris racine au milieu de ses tulipes et devant la Solitaire; il ouvre de grands yeux, il frotte ses mains, il se baisse, il la voit de plus près, il ne l'a jamais vue si belle, il a le cœur épanoui de joie; . . . ."

and that superb final sentence:—

"Cet homme raisonnable, qui a une âme, qui a un culte et une religion, revient chez soi fatigué, affamé, mais fort content de sa journée: il a vu des tulipes."

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## THE MODERN CALIGULA.

*Twelve Years at the Imperial German Court.* By Count ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, Former Controller of the Household of William II. (Nisbet. 15s.)

SINCE the outbreak of the war the Kaiser, to most Englishmen, has been a myth, just as Napoleon was. For when we go to war someone has to embody the devil we are fighting. We are St. George and there must be a dragon. But in fact, the Kaiser, for all his bluster, had little to do either with producing the war or with conducting it. The interest he presents—an interest comic or tragic at the observer's taste—is the well-worn one of the man playing at autocracy. Caligula, as a German satirist long ago discovered, is the best historical analogy. The Kaiser had abilities, versatility, personal charm, and before the war these qualities exercised their seduction on the most varied of men—on Krupp, on Rhodes, on Roosevelt, and even, half against his will, on the author of these diaries. But all these gifts came to nothing, or worse, because their possessor had no need and no opportunity to develop them. They degenerated, therefore, into mere poses. To-day it is radium ; to-morrow it will be the excavations in Babylon ; and perhaps the next day he will discourse on free and unprejudiced scientific research. The development of machinery is a very favourite subject. He is following very closely the transition from the cylinder-engine to the turbine and the motor. While he keeps in touch with all progress in these fields he does not neglect literature. He is full of curiosity about the practical applications of science, and is always eager, whenever possible, to invite any man who has any useful invention to his credit to come and explain it to him. They came ; and the subtle flattery of being talked to seriously by a real emperor overwhelmed them. They thought a Kaiser who could say the right things on so many topics must be a universal genius.

Count Zedlitz-Trützschler, Controller of the Household, was in a better position to judge, and his honest, perplexed mind drove him from admiration to doubt and gloom, and finally to resignation. It was not merely that the Kaiser loved practical jokes, though our author naturally did not like being tumbled into a basket by the young princes, carried round the room amid the laughter of the Court, and "decanted" ignominiously on the floor. To have one's ears pulled and one's back thumped by Majesty was too common an event not to be accepted, in the end, with resignation. Nor was it only that your best arrangements were suddenly thrown out of gear by the whims of the imperial master, deciding at the last minute to go to some quite different place at some quite different time, and impatient, as all autocrats are, of that base word "impossible." Doubts and forebodings more anxious than these agitated the Controller. When, for instance, the Kaiser asserted, as he did again and again, that only a Christian could be a good soldier, and when nevertheless the Japanese so obviously beat the Russians, what was one to think ? And then, the Navy. "When he was inspecting the shipbuilding yards he had noticed some deck semaphores. Then he remembered suddenly that he had introduced these into the Navy, but had not seen them on board the ships for some considerable time." Why was this ? Admirals explained deferentially that really the semaphores did not work. In reply the Emperor "simply said" that "he had introduced the system and desired to see it restored." The Admirals walked up and down the deck conversing in perturbation. The Emperor "suddenly made for them," and asked them "sternly and in a very loud voice : 'What is the meaning of all this talk ? Are my commands obeyed in the Navy, or are they not ?' There was universal alarm and complete silence. On the same evening at supper Admiral v. Köster was already able to report that the semaphores had been installed again in every ship of the fleet."

As to foreign policy, all the other material at our disposal seems to make it certain that our author exaggerates the part played by the Kaiser. He talked much and indiscreetly, in all companies, but he did very much what his Chancellor wanted. No doubt, however, he needed careful handling ; his Ministers took care to give him the impression

of events which they desired him to receive. "The Chancellor is playing the oddest game in the Morocco business. He always shows the Emperor newspaper cuttings which tell him how ridiculous the French are making themselves and how they have got the worst of the whole affair. This naturally convinces the Emperor that our policy in Morocco has been the most brilliant success imaginable. The Emperor is completely in the toils of these ideas, and as he has great skill in not allowing people to express any idea that does not please him, the result is that the truth never comes to his ears." Again : "It is not without its perils that the Emperor, as a rule, only reads extracts and never looks at a complete paper. The Foreign Office, which sends him these cuttings, has complete control of the matter, and can extend or limit the Emperor's reading about the events of the day. It does this at its own sweet will, and can thus make him think what it wants him to."

Under these circumstances the Kaiser's irresponsible and whirling words cannot be taken too seriously. He thought, for instance, or thought he thought, that King Edward was "mobilizing against him the whole Press of the world." "He is a Satan ; you can hardly believe what a Satan he is." That was in 1907. But in 1909 King Edward visited Germany, and "the Emperor was delighted." All went off so well, and "the English cannot come up to us in this sort of thing." Perhaps they cannot, though somehow one does not think that, in a State procession through London, a Royal carriage would go so slowly that "in places the police and the bystanders had to push it." Even those little contretemps, however, were grist to the autocrat's mill, for, when he introduced his Master of the Horse to the Queen of England, he was able to say "loudly enough for everyone present to hear" : "This is the Master of the Horse, who has made an incredible ass of himself with your carriage."

In what tragedy all this was to end we know. But this half-madman, half-genius was rather a puppet than a puller of the strings. He thought of himself as omnipotent, and they "fooled him to the top of his bent." What he thinks of it all now, as he paces his rooms in Holland, we can only guess. But I venture to conjecture that he appears to himself as a martyr. He is not that, any more than a prophet or a seer. He is an ex-autocrat.

G. LOWES DICKINSON.

## ARTHUR SYMONS AND MR. DE LA MARE.

*The Collected Works of Arthur Symons.* (Secker. £12 the Set of 16 Volumes.)

*Ding - Dong - Bell.* By WALTER DE LA MARE. (Selwyn & Blount. 5s.)

ARTHUR SYMONS made his own confession of faith when he wrote that he saw "no necessary difference in artistic value between a good poem about a flower in a hedge and a good poem about the scent in a sachet." Setting aside the controversial but perennially interesting point suggested by that observation, namely, whether some subject-matter is intrinsically poetic whereas other subject-matter is not, one is led by the mention of Arthur Symons to the recollection of the now slightly unfashionable but once significant period called by us the "eighteen-nineties," of which Symons as a critic may fairly be presented as the interpreter, and as a poet the exponent. One remembers that for a short but brilliant twelve months he edited the "Savoy," that bolder rival of the "Yellow Book" ; one remembers, too, his admirably judged pronouncements on the artistic and literary tendencies of his own day. "After a fashion it is no doubt a decadence," he wrote. "If what we call the classic is indeed the supreme art—those qualities of perfect simplicity, perfect sanity, perfect proportion, the supreme interesting, beautiful, novel, as it is, is really a new and beautiful and interesting disease." Such phrases illuminate the value of Symons as a critic. In spite of the trees, in spite of being himself one of the trees, he was yet able to see the wood. Although he himself elected to follow the prevailing fashion as a man of letters, he remained as a critic fully alive to the faults which might and would be found with his age by its detractors.

It was an age of affectation—not the graceful affectation of the *dixhuitième*, though *bergerie* figured indeed in its

poetical stock-in-trade, but an affectation more exotic, more desperate, more challenging, the swan-song of a dying century. It was an age of febrile and gas-lit perversity, of paradox, of sensationalism. It was an age that preferred contortions to proportions. It was the age of "A Rebours," of "Salome," of "Under the Hill." But though we may apply to it, as Symons applied, that loose term decadence, we may not apply the term decay. Such an explosion of creative genius, creative though it may have been along lines which modern thought does not greatly esteem, is still surely an expression of energy rather than of decay. The energies of the 'nineties led, certainly, into a *cul-de-sac*, for artificiality is always sterile, but while it was alive it lived intensely, at the high pressure of a life rowelled by the spur of a mortal disease. And as the interpreter of the 'nineties Arthur Symons cannot be forgotten. If in his own poems he parades less of the exotic than many of his contemporaries, he at least represents supremely one facet of the taste of his day: he is the poet of the town. Nature was fallen out of favour; she was provincial; a frump. The dog-rose and the hawthorn were rooted out of poets' gardens, and their place taken by "The iron lilies of the Strand."

"Is there any reason," asked Symons, "why we should write exclusively about the natural blush if the deliberately acquired blush of rouge has any attraction for us? The latter as a subject has, at all events, more novelty," and with that novelty he enriched his lyrics, being particular to affirm that he saw no reason why out of the pavements, the lights, and the life of a city good poetry should not be made, as well as out of sunsets, moors, and mountains. He respected those who had convictions and could live up to them, and as a manifestation of the spirit of his age his attitude was certainly defensible. Unfortunately for one who was born a graceful and supple rhymer, his work is likely to suffer from the urbane dandyism he affected, and from being read in the future not so much for its own merits as out of a literary curiosity.

To many Mr. de la Mare's latest book may come as a disappointment, and I confess that on a first reading I thought it too slight a thing to carry the weight of printing and binding, and, above all, of the excitement which any new work of his must produce in his admirers. I have gone back on that first impression, and think of it now only as a small but very fragrant flower in the meadows of English literature. It is true that it is slight—three tiny sketches, all laid in the setting of a graveyard—but since Mr. de la Mare seems unable to write anything which does not give off the flavour of his own peculiar quality, such complaints are merely churlish. This quality of Mr. de la Mare's, subtle and persistent, is difficult, almost impossible, of analysis; probably it could be reduced, in the end, to word-association and even to syllabic association, but—not to put the moth's wing under the microscope—I prefer to think that the common words do truly take on a new value, a surprising significance, under his handling, so that their very appearance on the printed page is altered, and their meaning charged with a brighter colour, a clearer note. If a poet can give us this, and can go on giving us this, as Mr. de la Mare can, then, indeed, he is justified in printing even the scraps he writes on the backs of envelopes. Graveyards, too, may be said to be very much Mr. de la Mare's subject. His is a twilight mind. "Dusk," he writes, "as a matter of fact, is *my* mind's natural illumination. How many of us, I wonder, 'think' in anything worthy of being called a noonday of consciousness?" Among the gravestones, among the yews, in a fading light, this poet of dusk moves as tenderly as a wraith, uttering the epitaphs of his own making.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

#### MOUNTAIN-CLIMBING IN EXCELSIS.

*The Making of a Mountaineer.* By GEORGE INGLE FINCH. (Arrowsmith. 30s.)

STORIES of high mountaineering come like a bracing wind from the glaciers; and they blow all too seldom in these exhausted years. The higher the climber aims, the less patient he would seem to be of stooping to gather up his memories while the dew of their morning enthusiasm is still on them. And, unfortunately for us, great mountaineering appears to imply a surplus vitality that insists upon con-

tinuing in activity beyond the age proper for milder and more reminiscent forms of expression. Happily, Mr. Ingle Finch has proved the exception; he has not waited until his own memories of great climbs, or our admiring recollection of the earlier assaults upon Mount Everest, had grown dim. His dignified volume retains the right freshness of outlook, and the singleness of a still active adventurer's purpose. Irresistibly, it takes for granted our agreement that mountain-climbing is the finest pursuit in the world, and that we can all learn to climb equally well; and it proceeds at once to the next step, the demonstration of the "chief things of the ancient mountains," and of the fashion of pursuing them, and them only. It is practical demonstration, not lecturing; and it is demonstration in a thrilling form. Mr. Finch has selected a representative number of his own ascents, and he recounts them with lucidity and restraint, so that we may follow, progressively, the stages of his own development: from a boyhood first captured by the magic of distance in Australia, through the early years of training in the Alps, to the final phase, the masterly designing and execution of original ascents upon exceptionally difficult mountains.

His examples are so exciting in themselves that we are lured on unhesitatingly, heedless as to what lesson any one of them may contain for our varied inexperience. The illustrations, an artistic collection, remarkable for their treatment of light, only add to our beguilement. If ever, consequently, he turns upon us with a technical question or a criticism of other methods, we are taken by surprise, and murmur confused agreement, in the hope that he may thus be induced to launch into yet another picturesque story. Maybe, in the pause, a doubt does intrude; the sort of mistrust we began to feel about ourselves when the music-master, a soloist turned teacher, executed a brilliant rendering of a "piece," with variations, and remarked to the respectful silence that followed, "There now—do it like that!" Mr. Finch, a past-master of his craft, seems to have recognized this possibility. To suit his pace more nearly to ours, he interposes reassuring and racy passages from his early winter experiences on ski, and introduces, as an example of how to organize an exploration, a sunny account of new climbs in Corsica. His brother, a sympathetic auxiliary throughout, in like manner suggests a serious warning, by a grimly humorous winter adventure; and Mrs. Ingle Finch demonstrates the learner's proper attitude of mind and body, in a traverse of the Matterhorn, delightfully described. But even with these indulgences we may not entirely have recovered our ease. Ought our novitiate never to make ice-steps in zig-zags, as guides make them, conveniently for the side of the foot, even if we wear no "crampons"? If we are forbidden to think of our opportunity of British rocks and snow as a training consistent with our Alpine hopes, what is to become of our army of week-end climbers, who now frequent them in trust, and who have acquired a subversive habit, also, of turning their experience to good account in the Alps? If, again, even the Grépon is pronounced too monotonously "sound" a rock to qualify as a test of real climbing, might not even the Matterhorn—of Mr. Finch's devotion as of ours—if climbed under the same levelling conditions, be found wanting not only as rock, but for its inadequacy of ice and snow? But the tap of the adventurous ice-axe recalls us hopefully to attention, and we settle down comfortably again to the last chapters, sure of our fill of sensation in the stirring story of the Dent Hérens, the Mont Blanc explorations, and the unfinished duel with Mount Everest.

It is a book of great climbs by an all-round mountaineer, a scientist with a keen eye for beauty. Although we may never "make" ourselves mountaineers of Mr. Finch's stature, by any amount of taking thought along his intensive lines of preparation, if we do not possess his natural endowment, we cannot read him without catching something of his spirit. Hardship and danger, in the estimable form they assume upon difficult peaks, are worth pursuing for their own sake, if, by due preparation, we can turn them to our profit as hardihood and a heightening of our appreciation of all natural beauty. It is a worthy theme, worthily demonstrated. We must hope that Mr. Finch will return to it—especially to more of those early pilgrimages of the two brothers.

G. WINTHROP YOUNG.

## NEW YORK AND LONDON MIXTURES.

**Old New York** : *False Dawn*—the Forties; *The Old Maid*—the Fifties; *The Spark*—the Sixties; *New Year's Day*—the Seventies. By EDITH WHARTON. Four vols. (Appleton. 4s. 6d. net. 18s. 6d. the set.)

**London Mixture.** By Mrs. ALFRED SIDGWICK. (Collins. 7s. 6d.)

In these four little novels of Old New York, Mrs. Wharton plays the double part of impressionist and story-teller, and succeeds in blending her two rôles with the perfection only attainable by a fine and subtle artist. Against a background rich in local and historical colour, she reveals those elemental human passions which, while they may superficially reflect their immediate setting, are perennially the same the world over. The New York to which she introduces us is the New York that accepted Thackeray, but declined to receive Charles Dickens—"the exclusive and impenetrable" New York of the middle decades of last century, with its self-sufficing little society of inter-marrying families, smugly Philistine and Pharisaical. Life, however, is life, and refuses to be dammed by any arbitrary social code. If it cannot flow naturally upon the surface, it will find its way into secret corners and subterranean channels, from which it will fitfully burst above ground to the shocked amazement of those who seek to repress it.

In each of Mrs. Wharton's four tales we see life defying the bounds prescribed for it by the complacent conventionality of Old New York. "False Dawn" describes how the comfortable and pompous Halston Raycie sends forth his son, Lewis, upon the Grand Tour, from which, having sown his wild oats in foreign fields, he is to return and marry into one of the best local families. Halston Raycie, moreover, has conceived the idea of founding a Raycie Collection, and to this end he commissions Lewis to bring back from Europe specimens of the "recognised" Old Masters—the lesser Raphaels—whose names he has painfully acquired. Lewis, however, is in love with Beatrice Kent, the ward of a poor relative, and his love for her, no less than a talk with a young Englishman, John Ruskin, whom he meets on Mont Blanc, has the effect of awakening in him a passion for the newer art. For in one of the Madonnas which Ruskin advises him to see, Lewis beholds the features of his own "plain" Beatrice—with the result that he carries back to New York, not Salvator Rosa and Carlo Dolce, but "Carpatcher" and "Pierro della Francesca." These "worthless daubs" are received with frenzied scorn by his father, and Lewis's indiscretion costs him not only his inheritance, but eventually his life. After a vain effort to educate public taste, he and Beatrice die in poverty, martyrs to his artistic conscience. It is not until some decades later that an obscure descendant, changing residences, finds that a forgotten lumber of pictures in her attic can be turned into unlimited pearls and Rolls-Royces.

"The Old Maid" narrates the tragedy of Charlotte Lovell, who, having illicitly indulged her love for one outside her own circle, assumes the character of a benevolent spinster, and establishes a home for children, hoping by this means to retain her own baby, while avoiding social ostracism. "The Spark" turns upon the revolution—very disconcerting to respectability—which is wrought in Hayley Delane's heart by a chance meeting, in a Civil War hospital, with an "atheist" who has yet a strange capacity for inspiring Christian charity, and who is revealed to us at last as Walt Whitman. Finally, in "New Year's Day," we are given a study of "that bad woman," Lizzie Hazelden, whose sin has in it a courage and nobility undreamt of in the philosophy of Old New York. Such bald summary, however, does scant justice to Mrs. Wharton's art, which, with its combination of ingenuity and fidelity to character, of irony and deep human compassion, of bold outline and exquisite delicacy of detail, adds, with this new achievement, a fresh lustre to American literature.

Mrs. Sidgwick has also written an ironical commentary upon those artificial social barriers which, in modern London as in Old New York, are the enemy of life. Her "London Mixture," however, is made from a time-worn prescription. Here we have, once again, the impecunious family raised, by a sudden stroke of fortune, to affluence—not, however, before two of its daughters have been hustled by their mother into unhappy marriages. And here we have also the perfect six-foot khaki hero who, having vanished from the life of

the third daughter, accidentally meets her in Italy at the psychological moment. Mrs. Sidgwick's plot is threadbare. But her characters are effectively drawn, and she has a real faculty for exposing the petty hatreds and jealousies of suburban society.

GILBERT THOMAS.

## POETS' PROSE.

**Essays.** By W. B. YEATS. (Macmillan. 10s. 6d.)

**Recent Prose.** By JOHN MASEFIELD. (Heinemann. 6s.)

**Literary Essays and Reviews.** By RICHARD ALDINGTON. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. YEATS's volume, being a reprint of three earlier books, contains the major part of his prose written during the last twenty-five years. His work does not gain by presentation in this form. That may not be the opinion of the ordinary reader, dipping into the volume at his own leisure; but it is the main impression left upon the reviewer who has perforce taken the five hundred pages at two sittings. To re-read a few of Mr. Yeats's essays is not only to be conscious once again of his sincerity, his exquisite sensitiveness, and his unfailing distinction of style, but to be almost lulled (or lulled?) into acceptance of his own belief that only that art "which does not teach, which does not cry out, which does not persuade, which does not condescend, which does not explain, is irresistible." When, however, you have read his "Ideas of Good and Evil," and pass on immediately to "The Cutting of an Agate," the spell begins to weaken. The style grows a little monotonous; reiterations become increasingly noticeable; and the atmosphere that was at first so refreshing ends by being enervating. Mr. Yeats, moreover, is found to be as much the slave of a theory as any of those "critics of life" and "interpreters of things" whom he condemns, and he presses his theory to extremes from which it inevitably recoils upon itself. His essays are, in effect, one sustained plea that we should turn from the "criticism of life" school of poetry, as exemplified for him in the work of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Browning, and lose—or rather find—ourselves in a world of pure imagination:—

"If you suspend the critical faculty, I have discovered, either as the result of training, or, if you have the gift, by passing into a slight trance, images pass rapidly before you. If you suspend also desire, and let them form at their own will, your absorption becomes more complete and they are more clear in colour, more precise in articulation, and you and they begin to move in the midst of what seems a powerful light. . . . Those who follow the old rule keep their bodies still and their minds awake and clear, dreading especially any confusion between the images of the mind and the objects of sense."

All life, however, is an affair of complementary actions and reactions, and there comes a point at which "wise passivity"—or, as Mr. Yeats calls it, "clear quiet"—will defeat its own end by turning sincerity itself into self-deception, and imagination into mere fancy or mannerism. Mr. Yeats does not always escape this danger, and, though he offers us a delightful momentary escape from life, it is with something of relief that, turning to Mr. Masefield, we emerge from the Celtic twilight into a world of stronger, if sometimes cruder, colours.

Mr. Masefield's little volume is thoroughly characteristic of his versatile and wayward genius, which is the despair of those who can only enjoy what they can label. "The Taking of Helen," which occupies half the book, is a very successful attempt to retell the classical story in the manner of a modern novel and with the cleverly devised illusion of a modern setting. In "Letters," Mr. Masefield recounts some of his American experiences, and his description of a flight in an aeroplane combines the rapture of the poet with the precision of an engineer. In a paper on "Play-writing," originally delivered as an address, he sets forth very lucidly the cardinal principles of that art, and then, by way of showing their application, himself writes a little play that is at once a serious demonstration and a rollicking burlesque. In "John M. Synge" he recalls his own memories of that "perfect companion." But the essay in which he most fully reveals his many-sided personality, which never attains complete fusion or harmony, is that on "Fox-hunting," written as a preface to the American edition of "Reynard the Fox." Here, amid recollections of the author's boyhood

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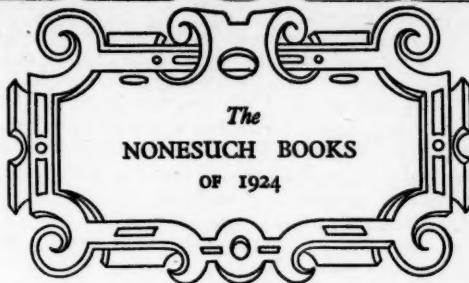
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#### THE EMPIRE.

**The Story of the Empire.** By Sir CHARLES LUCAS. **The Resources of the Empire.** By EVANS LEWIN. **Health Problems of the Empire.** By ANDREW BALFOUR and HENRY H. SCOTT. (Collins. 16s. each volume.)

**Britain Overseas.** By CUMBERLAND CLARK. (Kegan Paul. 12s. 6d.)

The Wembley Exhibition is having its effect upon the publishers and the printing presses in a considerable output of books dealing with the Empire. Messrs. Collins are to produce "A British Empire Survey," in twelve volumes, of which the three books mentioned above are a first instalment. The object of all the four books under review is mainly to give facts and information. Sir Charles Lucas and Mr. Clark cover very much the same ground. Each attempts to tell briefly the story of the development of the Empire from that May day in 1497 when John Cabot sailed West from Bristol down to the end of the Great War. They have produced useful text-books containing a large number of facts, but there are necessarily many pitfalls in this summary treatment of so vast and complicated a stretch of history. Imperialism has more than one face, and opinions may and do differ as to their beauty, but this fact could hardly be gathered at all from the picture of her which Sir Charles and Mr. Clark offer to us. They show us only an official Empire Day portrait of the lady, with bands playing and flags flying. No doubt this is partly due to the "exigencies of space," but it detracts none the less from the value of these volumes. Let us give an almost random example. Of the Zulu War of 1879 Mr. Clark writes:—

"Cetywayo was perpetrating outrages on the borders of the Transvaal and Natal, and the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, determined to curb his power. He dispatched an ultimatum, to which Cetywayo did not deign to reply. A British force was, therefore, dispatched under Lord Chelmsford, and invaded Zululand in January, 1879."

Perhaps these sentences could be defended as literally true, but who could possibly suspect the tangled imperialistic story which lies behind them?

Mr. Lewin has produced rather a remarkable volume. It is a real survey of the "economic resources of the Empire." He takes the various food products and raw materials *seriatim*, and for each tells you exactly which portions of the Empire do or might produce them. He has contrived to pack into the compass of less than three hundred pages an amazing number of facts, and for reference purposes his book should prove of real value. It suffers, however, from the protectionist bias of the author. Mr. Lewin's ideal seems to be a self-supporting Empire, and his enthusiasm for it leads him not to be content with the ordinary political and politico-strategic arguments of the imperialist, but to summon to his aid the simplest of economic fallacies.

The most interesting of these volumes is that by Dr. Balfour and Dr. Scott of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The nature of their book is correctly defined in their Preface as "a sketch, a bird's-eye view of

a great drama, an outline of public health history in its relation to the British Empire." The title and the subject may appear forbidding, but the chapters which deal with the great imperial diseases such as plague and malaria, and the methods adopted for fighting them, are of great interest even to the ignorant layman.

#### THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE.

**Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge.** By Professor NORMAN KEMP SMITH. (Macmillan. 10s. 6d.)

The problem of sense perception has become for philosophers one of bewildering complexity. To the plain man admittedly it is simple enough. There is the outside world, and there is his own consciousness which illuminates the outside world like a searchlight and tells him what it contains. Everything we know is in fact out there waiting to be known. Difficulties arise when it is found that some of the things we know are very decidedly not out there; there are the objects we meet in dreams, there are hallucinations, there are the unauthentic colours of the colour-blind man, and there is the duplicated world of the man who is drunk.

In order to account for these apparently unusual objects, early philosophers substituted for the searchlight consciousness of the plain man a sort of dark cabinet containing a lighted screen upon which our senses threw pictures or images of the outside world. The things of which we are conscious are not, therefore, those that exist independently of us, but are their representations, sometimes called "ideas," in our brains, and it is an easy matter to account for any queerness which they may happen to possess by putting it down to the eccentricities of our own nervous system. At this stage, then, we have three ingredients in perception—knowing mind, ideas or images which are known, and external world which is the cause of the images.

The trouble about this view lay in the fact that it really amounted to a complete denial of the existence of the external world. If you never know the outside world, but always know its alleged images, you cannot know anything about the outside world; you cannot, therefore, know either that it has the power of causing the images or that it exists. Hence you are left with two things only, your mind and its ideas, and for all you know to the contrary, these are literally the only existing things in the Universe.

The loneliness of this position makes it uncomfortable even for philosophers, most of whom spend their time in trying to escape from it. The most obvious way out is to reject the dark-cabinet notion from the beginning. It may be possible to substitute a direct knowledge of some sort of external world for an indirect knowledge through mental images, and this is the line upon which realists, including Professor Kemp Smith, proceed. Their troubles begin when they are asked to say what sort of external world it is. Certainly not a world of objects, since, if we carefully examine our immediate consciousness, we find that what it consists of is not chairs and tables, but patches of colour, raps of sound, hot somethings and cold somethings, all of which we put together into physical objects by a later process of mental construction. These immediate data of consciousness are known as *sensa*, and most modern philosophy consists of a controversy with regard to their status. Here, then, in the *sensa* we have a new entity on our hands.

Now these various entities, knowing mind, images or *sensa*, and physical objects, not to speak of such doubtful forms of existence as time and space, may be combined, arranged, and rearranged in as many different ways as the ingredients of a pudding. According to your arrangement, so will be your philosophy.

Professor Kemp Smith's arrangement is a new one, highly ingenious, but exceedingly difficult. He is a realist in holding that the *sensa* belong to the physical and not to the psychical order of things, but concedes a point to the Idealists in granting that their nature is partly determined by physiological, and, in certain cases, psychological conditions in ourselves. They have developed *pari passu* with the sense organs and the brain, their character at each stage of human evolution being conditioned by and appropriate to that stage. It follows that one man's *sensa* can never be another's, the *sensa* being private to the particular per-

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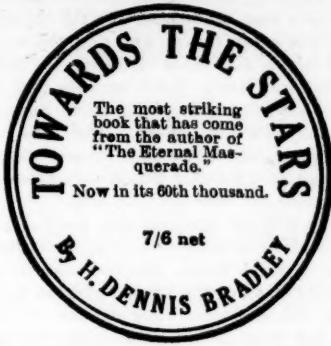
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spective in which they are sensed. To the objection that this is perilously like subjectivism, and that there must be some public world which may have elements in common for two observers, Professor Kemp Smith answers that there is such a world, and that it consists of Time and Space. These are public, but they are not sensed. They are perceived not through the *sensa*, but in terms of them; they are in fact "intuited," and in Professor Smith's doctrine of Intuition and the categories we have his Idealism.

In reading a dissertation of this kind it is difficult to avoid the impression of being present at a peculiarly abstruse kind of game in which *sensa*, physical objects, minds, time and space, and ideas are the pawns. Fitted by each player into different combinations, they achieve at best internal consistency; but their relationship to life remains doubtful. Professor Smith is a powerful player; he knows all the moves of the game, and is quick to forestall those of his opponents; but he is also an extremely dull one—stodgy he would be called if the game were one of chess and not of philosophy. He is very difficult to read, and his system suffers from a complexity both of mental processes and objective materials which is directly due to his attempt to make the best of several worlds which most of us think incompatible.

An Idealistic theory of knowledge founded on a Realist basis is something of a hybrid, and Professor Kemp Smith, with all his adroitness, does not make it "breed true."

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Mr. Leaf suggests that the raising of Bank Rate to 5 per cent. might be supported "by an increase in the interest allowed by the Banks on foreign deposits to, say, 3½ per cent."

"The rise in the rate," he continues, "should be accompanied by an explicit announcement that it expressed a definite policy on the part of this country, and that it was our intention to return to a gold basis. There can be little doubt that these measures, taken in connection with the fall of the Federal Reserve rate now in progress in America, would bring about parity by sure and certain steps, possibly much sooner than most people are at present willing to expect."

It is clear from this that Mr. Leaf hopes to bring about the desired result, without any considerable deflation of prices, by attracting floating balances from America to London, by the offer of higher interest rates, coupled with the expectation of an exchange profit that would arise from the belief that sterling would soon return to par. Higher short-loan rates in London than in New York would undoubtedly tend in the direc-

tion of attracting foreign balances here; but it would not be an important factor, unless accompanied by the expectation of an exchange profit, or at least by confidence that there would be no exchange loss. This psychological factor is thus essential to Mr. Leaf's argument; but in practice, we believe, it would not operate exactly as he expects. It might be extremely powerful, so long as sterling was a considerable distance below par; but, as par was approached, its force would diminish; and its direction would be reversed before par was actually reached. This was our experience last year; the pound rose to within a few points of par, mainly under the influence of the same anticipation, which Mr. Leaf desires to recreate. But then its force was spent; for there was little room left for any further exchange profit by buying sterling, while the possibility of a reaction leading to an exchange loss became considerable.

Ultimately it is on relative price-levels that the exchange depends, and it is idle to suppose that any device will serve to bring us back to par, without either an inflation of prices in America, or a deflation of prices here. The raising of Bank Rate would, of course, tend in the latter direction; and its permanent efficacy in raising the exchange would be proportionate to the magnitude of this effect. A deflation of prices to the extent of 10 per cent., or more, could not possibly be accomplished without a further period of accentuated trade depression and intensified unemployment. Public opinion would never permit such a policy to be carried through to the end; and, in these circumstances, it would be merely foolish to embark on it. Mr. Leaf assures himself that his policy "should have the support of those who believe in 'managed currency' and stabilized prices, for it would tend to correct the tendency to a higher index-number which has made itself manifest since August last." We hasten to disillusion him. It is true that the price-level is a trifle higher than it was in August last. The rise that has taken place represents no more than the slight readjustment which is an essential feature of every recovery of trade from the bottom of a depression. But the price-level is no longer rising; on the contrary, it has fallen slightly in the last few months; and there is nothing whatever in the condition of trade to warrant a single deflationary step. Business confidence is still hesitant and weak; and the raising of Bank Rate at this juncture would be a deplorable mistake. The mere suggestion, coming from so responsible a quarter, may do something to cloud the outlook and check enterprise.

We think it improbable, on the whole, that the Bank of England will take Mr. Leaf's advice; but no one can feel much confidence as to what will happen if an unfavourable movement in the exchange develops under seasonal influences, coupled with heavy foreign investment. It is reported that the Bank is attempting to provide against this danger by adopting the sensible plan, urged in these columns, of disowning the floating in London of new foreign issues. But if this does not prove effective, it is quite possible that the Bank may be stimulated by Mr. Leaf and others to raise Bank Rate. This possibility reveals the fact that the vagueness of our present monetary policy has its disadvantages as well as its conveniences. There is close touch between the Treasury and the Bank of England; and the latter would never attempt to go against a declared national policy. But our official policy is still that of the Cunliffe Report. So long as there was agreement that it should be interpreted so as to exclude immediate deflation, that seemed innocuous enough. But if the Government should find itself embarrassed in the midst of its unemployment schemes by a high Bank Rate policy and other deflationary measures, it may have reason to regret its declared adhesion to the "conclusions" of the Cunliffe Committee.

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